WASHINGTON

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BIOGRAPHY

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BY

BENSON J. LOSSING

AUTHOR OF *FIELD-BOOK OF THE REVOLUTION*, *PICTORIAL FIELD-BOOK OF THE WAR OF 1812*, *PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR*, ETC., ETC.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

J. ALFRED BURGAN

AUTHOR OF *LIFE AND WORKS OF WILLIAM HOGARTH*, ETC., ETC., ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF *THE HISTORY OF NORTH AMERICA*

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CHAPTER I.

THE UNION FLAG RAISED — GENERAL HOWE'S MISTAKE — THE KING'S SPEECH — ITS HOSTILE TONE TOWARD THE AMERICANS — ITS EFFECT IN ENGLAND — DESIGNS OF THE MINISTRY — CABINET CHANGES — BARGAIN WITH GERMAN PRINCES FOR MERCENARY TROOPS — HOLLAND'S REBUKE — THE SCHEME DENOUNCED IN PARLIAMENT — PROCEEDINGS OF THAT BODY — THE MINISTRY TRIUMPHANT — THE KING ASHAMED — CONTEMPT EXPRESSED BY FREDERICK THE GREAT — EFFECT OF THE KING'S SPEECH IN AMERICA — EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION — PAINE'S "COMMON SENSE" — ITS EFFECTS.

THE first of January, 1776, the birthday of the new continental army, was marked by two important events, insignificant in themselves, but momentous as connecting links in the chain of current events. On that day Washington caused a union flag to be unfurled over the new army. It was composed of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, with the device of the British union (the combined crosses of St. George and St. Andrew) in the corner where the white stars on a blue field are placed in the flag of the United States. At that time, it must be remembered, the Americans had not only not declared themselves independent of Great Britain, but they still professed loyalty to the king. They continued to call the army in Boston "ministerial," not "royal," troops; and, with a few exceptions, no doubt the great mass of the American people, at that time, did cherish loyal sentiments toward their sovereign. They despised the weak and wicked ministry, and denounced them as enemies to the British constitution and the rights of man, at the same time they earnestly desired reconcilia-

tion with the parent government. A flag bearing the British and American symbols of union was, therefore, an appropriate and consistent ensign to be unfurled upon that special occasion.*

The other event was the reception of copies of the king's speech on the opening of Parliament, which were sent by General Howe to the headquarters of the American army — a speech, as Washington said in a letter to the president of Congress, "full of rancor and resentment," evincing his royal will to be, that rigorous measures should be pursued toward the "rebels," to deprive them of their "constitutional rights and liberties." The bearer of the speech remained awhile at Cambridge; and soon after he left, the union flag alluded to was raised upon Mount Pisgah, in full view of Boston, and thirteen heavy guns were fired, and as many cheers were given. These demonstrations were misinterpreted by Howe as indications that the "gracious speech" of his majesty had made a favorable impression upon Washington and his compatriots, and that they would soon submit and sue for pardon and peace. But the effect of that speech was quite the reverse. "Farcical enough," wrote Washington, "we gave great joy to them without knowing or intending it;" but instead of receiving the speech with favor or fear, it was burned in the midst of deep execrations, mingled with expressions of sorrow because of the delusion of the king.

That speech was delivered from the throne at the opening of Parliament, which assembled much earlier than usual, on account, as the king frankly avowed, of the troubles in America. It was convened on the twenty-sixth of October, while the city of London was in commotion on account of the arrest of Stephen Sayre, an eminent American banker (a friend of Franklin, and recently lord-mayor), on a charge of high treason.† Both houses were quite full.

* What was the character and device of that "union flag?" has always been an open question. A drawing made in the summer of 1776, of the schooner *Royal Savage*, belonging to Arnold's fleet on Lake Champlain, found by the writer among the official papers of General Schuyler, settles the question. At the mast-head is a striped flag, with the British union in the corner.

† On the twenty-third of October, only three days before the assembling of Parliament, two king's messengers, attended by constables, repaired to the house of Mr. Sayre, with an order from Lord Rochford for his arrest, and to search for, seize, and carry off his papers. When made acquainted with their errand, he permitted them to examine his papers. They found nothing of consequence He was taken to Lord Rochford's house, where a magistrate was in readiness, and there he was

The speech was unusually long and forcible. The king evidently felt the thickening of dangers at home and in the colonies, and had been persuaded that vigorous, compulsory measures, rather than conciliatory ones, were necessary and proper.

"Those," said the king, "who have too long successfully labored to influence my people in America by gross misrepresentations, and to infuse into their minds a system of opinions repugnant to the true constitution of the colonies, and to their subordinate relation to Great Britain, now openly avow their revolt, hostility, and rebellion. They have raised troops, and are collecting a naval force; they have seized the public revenue, and assumed to themselves legislative, executive, and judicial powers, which they already exercise in the most arbitrary manner over the persons and property of their fellow-subjects; and, although many of these unhappy people may still retain their loyalty, and may be too wise not to see the fatal consequence of this usurpation, and may wish to resist it, yet the torrent of violence has been strong enough to compel their acquiescence, till a sufficient force shall appear to support them. They meant only to amuse, by vague expressions of attachment to the parent-state, and the strongest protestations of loyalty to me, whilst they were preparing for a general revolt." The king then declared his desire, and that of Parliament, "to reclaim rather than subdue" the colonists, and added—"The rebellious war now levied is becoming more general, and is manifestly carried on for the purpose of establishing an independent empire. I need not dwell upon the fatal effects of such a plan. The object is too important, the spirit of the British nation too high, the resources with which God hath blessed her too numerous, to give up so many colonies which she has planted with great industry, nursed with great ten-

accused of having said to Adjutant Richardson, of the king's life-guards (an American by birth), that he intended to seize his majesty on the following Thursday while on his way to open Parliament, to take possession of the Tower, and to overturn the government. Sayre treated the charge with contempt, but was sent to the Tower by order of Lord Rochford. He was liberated upon bail on the twenty-eighth. He was discharged, and immediately commenced a suit against Lord Rochford for false imprisonment and illegal seizure of his papers. The trial took place in June following, and the jury, under instructions, made a special verdict in his favor of one thousand pounds damages, but with such conditions, that Mr. Sayre was not only deprived of the award, but was compelled to pay the heavy expenses of the suit.

derness, encouraged with many commercial advantages, and protected and defended at such expense of blood and treasure."

After this flagrant falsification of history, the king went on to say, that it was now the part of wisdom, and, in its effects, of clemency, to put an end to those disorders by decisive action; that for this purpose he had increased the land and augmented the naval forces; "yet in such a manner as to be least expensive or burthensome to his kingdom." He also informed Parliament, that he had received the most friendly offers of foreign assistance; that he had sent some of his electoral troops* to Gibraltar and Port Mahon, to supply the place of British troops to be drawn therefrom and sent to America, and added: "When the unhappy and deluded multitude against whom my forces will be directed shall become sensible of their error, I shall be ready to receive the misled with tenderness and mercy; and, in order to prevent the inconveniences which may arise from the great distance of their situation, and to remove, as soon as possible, the calamities which they suffer, I shall give authority to certain persons on the spot, to grant general or particular pardons and indemnities, in such manner and to such persons as they shall think fit, and to receive the submission of any province or colony which shall be disposed to return to its allegiance. It may also be proper to authorize the persons so commissioned to restore such province or colony so returning to its allegiance, to the free exercise of its trade and commerce, and to the same protection and security as if such province or colony had never revolted." He concluded by assuring the Parliament, that he saw no probability of those measures being interrupted by any disputes with foreign powers.

Thus discoursed King George the Third, or rather, thus dis-

* Originally, all the members of the Germanic body made choice of their head, but, finally, seven princes, who possessed the greatest power, assumed the exclusive privilege of nominating the emperor. An eighth elector was made in 1648, and a ninth in 1692, in favor of the duke of Hanover. George the First, of England, was the son and heir of Ernest Augustus, elector of Hanover, and notwithstanding he became king of England in 1714, he inherited and maintained the electorate of Hanover. It was hereditary in his family, and George the Third retained his title and his power until 1804, when, on the dissolution of the governing emperor, and the crown of Austria being made hereditary, the electorship ceased. "Electoral troops" were soldiers of Hanover.

coursed Frederic, Lord North, the prime-minister of the king, by his majesty's lips. The speech had been prepared for the monarch with great care, for the ministry, having resolved on coercive measures, also determined that his majesty's message should be clear and explicit, unclouded by vague expressions or blind generalities. When it appeared, its tone excited almost universal regret. "There was indisputably more than one thing in this speech," says a late British historian,* "which no enlightened Englishman could or ought to approve." Weeks before its utterance, sagacious and patriotic men, having indications of the unwise policy of the ministry, had expressed their apprehensions. In August, the duke of Grafton, who held the privy seal, in a letter to Lord North, urged the necessity of reconciliation with America. The minister replied, seven weeks afterward, by sending his grace a copy of the king's speech, and saying: "It is longer and fuller than the speeches at the opening of sessions have usually been, because it was intended to give a general plan of the measures to be pursued against the American rebels." The duke was opposed to the scheme. He went to town immediately, resigned his office, and plainly told the king in person, that his blind ministers were deluding him. This resignation led to other cabinet changes. Dartmouth, generous and timid, took Grafton's place; and the talented, but "proud, imperious, and unpopular Sackville"—Lord George Germain—became colonial secretary.

There were passages of deep significance in the king's speech, which gave the Americans and their friends no ray of hope for justice and reconciliation, when fully understood. He had "greatly augmented his land forces," he said, in such manner "as to be least expensive or burthensome to his kingdoms." The transaction here referred to was one of the most disgraceful of that monarch's long reign. He had hired (at a cheaper rate, he thought, than he could raise troops at home), German mercenaries, to go over to America and engage in the butchery of his subjects, whose only crime was a determination to maintain rights guarantied by the British consti-

* Pictorial History of England, Reign of George the Third. i. 237.

tution! Before the meeting of Parliament the ministry had completed the nefarious bargain, by treaty, and they were not tardy in asking the supreme legislature to ratify it. By that agreement the duke of Brunswick was to furnish four thousand and eighty-four men; the landgrave of Hesse Cassel (who married the king's aunt), twelve thousand one hundred and four; the hereditary prince of Hesse, six hundred and eighty-eight, and the prince of Waldeck, six hundred and seventy; making a grand total of seventeen thousand five hundred and twenty-six soldiers, including officers.

Those German princes—those petty dealers in fighting-machines—perceiving the stern necessities of Britain (acknowledged by the ministry) drove a hard bargain. They made their prices according to the principles of trade when there is a small supply for a great demand. They asked and received, at the rate of thirty-six dollars a year for each man, and, in addition, were to receive large annual subsidies. Besides, the British king guarantied the dominions of these princes against foreign attack during the absence of their troops.

A hope that he might have Russian or other auxiliaries, had been entertained by the king. He wrote an autograph letter to the states-general of Holland, soliciting them to dispose of their Scotch brigade for service against the Americans: they nobly refused. He sent a message to the Parliament of Ireland, requesting a supply of troops for the same purpose: that body basely responded by voting four thousand men for the American service. They servilely agreed to send men to butcher their brethren and kinsmen for a consideration; while the generous and free-spirited Hollanders, with a voice of dignified rebuke, dissented, and refused to allow their soldiers to fight the strugglers for freedom, though strangers to them in blood and language. "Though not as principal," said John Derk Van der Chapelle, in the assembly of the states of Overyssel, "yet as auxiliaries, our troops would be employed in suppressing (what some please to call) a rebellion in the American colonies; for which purpose I would rather see janissaries hired than troops from a free state. In what an odious light must this

unnatural civil war appear to all Europe—a war in which even savages (if credit can be given to newspaper information) refuse to engage. More odious still would it appear, for a people to take a part therein who were themselves once slaves, bore that hateful name, but at last had spirit to fight themselves free. But, above all, it must appear superlatively detestable to me, who think the Americans worthy of every man's esteem, and look upon them as a brave people, defending, in a becoming, manly, and religious manner, those rights which, as men, they derive from God, and not from the legislature of Great Britain."

Similar, and even stronger sentiments of detestation, because of the proposed employment of German troops in the service against the Americans, were vehemently uttered on the floor of the British house of commons. The opposition were numerically weak, but were strong in intellectual qualities. Barré had lost none of his fire since his noble defence of the Americans ten years before. Burke was at the full maturity of his splendid powers as an orator, and Charles Fox was every day improving as a debater. These were all in opposition to the ministers, and composed a host in strength. "Since Parliament had existed," says a British tory writer, "there had, perhaps, never been a more rhetorical and elo quent opposition, and, certainly, there had never been a more active one." The voice of the great Chatham, however, could not be heard in the house of lords. He was closely confined to his house at Hayes, with the gout, and there he remained secluded, from the spring of 1775 until the spring of 1777.

When, on the twenty-ninth of February, 1776, Lord North moved that the treaties with the German princes should be referred to the committee of supply, the opposition opened their batteries in full power, and a most vehement debate ensued in the house of commons; more vehement than that on the address to the king after the reception of his speech, when Barré said: "The British army is a mere wen—a little excrescence on the vast continent of America"—and assured ministers that defeat was certain, when Wilkes, then lord-mayor, said ministers had "wrested the scep-

tre from the hands of his majesty;" and Fox declared Lord North to be a blundering pilot, who had brought the vessel of state into fearful difficulties—"in one campaign had lost a whole country."

Ministers pleaded necessity and economy as excuses for the measure. "There was not time," they said, "to fill the army with recruits, and hired soldiers would be cheaper in the end, for, after the war, if native troops were employed, there would be nearly thirty battalions to claim half-pay." These were the ostensible reasons, but the real object, doubtless, was to avoid the danger of having native troops affiliate with the insurgents when the broad Atlantic should roll between them and the British throne. The opposition would listen to no plea of expediency. They denounced the measure as not merely cruel toward the Americans, but disgraceful to the English name. They declared that England was degrading herself by applying to petty German princes for succor against her own subjects, and that nothing would so effectually bar the way for reconciliation with the colonists, as these barbarous preparations to enslave them. Actuated by the most sincere and laudable desire to preserve the fair fame of their country, the opposition used every endeavor to prevent the consummation of the wicked bargain. They represented the probability that the mercenaries would fraternize with their German brethren in America, then one hundred and fifty thousand strong, who were generally on the republican side; that they would accept land of the colonists, and, glad to escape from military despotism, would sheathe their swords and leave the British troops to perform the dreadful tragedy alone. But ministers counted largely upon the bravery and obedience of their hirelings, many of whom had served under Frederick the Great; and they actually indulged in the foolish expectation, that the *Hessians*, as these Germans were called, would so frighten the Americans by their fierce aspect and traditionary prowess, that it would only be necessary for these bloodhounds to show themselves, to cause the "rebels" to throw down their arms and sue for pardon! The ministry prevailed, and the treaties were referred to the committee on supply.

When the committee reported in favor of the treaties on the fourth of March, another warm debate ensued, especially in the house of lords. The duke of Richmond moved not only to countermand the order for the mercenaries to proceed to America, but to cease hostilities altogether. The earl of Coventry maintained, that an acknowledgment of the independence of the colonists was preferable to a war. "Look on the map of the globe," he said; "view Great Britain and North America; compare their extent, consider the soil, rivers, climate, and increasing population of the latter; nothing but the most obstinate blindness and partiality can engender a serious opinion, that such a country will long continue under subjection to this. The question is not, therefore, how we shall be able to realize a vain delusive scheme of dominion, but how we shall make it the interest of the Americans to continue faithful allies and warm friends. Surely that can never be effected by fleets and armies. Instead of meditating conquest and exhausting our strength in an ineffectual struggle, we should, wisely abandoning wild schemes of coercion, avail ourselves of the only substantial benefit we can ever expect, the profits of an extensive commerce, and the strong support of a firm and friendly alliance and compact for mutual defence and assistance."

This was the language of wise and sagacious statesmanship — of just and honorable principles — of wholesome and vigorous thought; yet it was denounced as treasonable in its tendency, and encouraging to rebellion. "The next easterly wind," said Lord Temple, "will carry to America every imprudent expression used in this debate. I do not wish that the nakedness and weakness of my country should stand confirmed by the authority and sanction of testimonies given in this house! It is a time to act, not to talk; much should be done, little said." But the ministerial power bore down all opposition. The report recommending the ratification of the bargain with the German princes was adopted, and the disgraceful and cruel act was consummated. The king ordered the mercenaries to America, to co-operate with a large land and naval force that had been prepared; and yet it is very evident, that the

sense of justice which always ruled the free actions of the monarch, and the natural goodness of his heart, often recoiled from the transaction.* When Lord North desired him to commission German officers, who had been appointed by their masters as early as October, he refused, saying: "The giving commissions to German officers to get men I can by no means consent to, for it, in plain English, amounts to making me a kidnapper, which I can not think a very honorable occupation."†

The king and the ministers well knew what outrages were to be committed by such officers; how, as afterward occurred, laborers would be seized in the fields and workshops, and large numbers be taken from churches while engaged in their devotions, and hurried to the barracks, without being allowed a parting embrace with their families. No wonder the honest-hearted king recoiled from direct participation in a work so heinous. Throughout Europe the whole transaction was viewed with horror as a great crime against humanity. Frederick the Great, of Prussia, took every occasion to express his contempt for the "scandalous man-traffic of his neighbors." It is said, that whenever any of those hired Brunswickers and Hessians had to pass through any portion of his territory, he claimed to levy on them the usual toll for so many head of cattle, since, he said, they had been sold as such.‡

Such, in brief outline, were some of the most important proceedings in Parliament, in the preparation of measures for crushing the rebellion in America—preparations which were accompaniments, or which followed as echoes, to the king's "gracious speech," that was regarded by Howe, when the union flag appeared floating over the "rebel army," as an antidote to the rampant insurgent spirit in the republican camp. But that speech, as we have observed, was productive of the hottest resentment, and stronger and

* The committee of supply proposed an augmentation of the navy to twenty-eight thousand men, and that eighty ships should be employed in the American waters. The land forces necessary they estimated at twenty-five thousand men. It was also proposed to organize the militia of the kingdom, so as to have an efficient force at home while the regulars should go abroad.

† Lord Mahon's History of England, Appendix, vol. vi., page 31. The king's letter to Lord North was dated November 14, 1775

‡ Mahon, vi., 131.

more widely prevalent desires for independence. Although the wicked bargain with the German princes was not then certainly known in America, and the significance of the paragraph in the king's speech alluding to it was an enigma, there was sufficient in the tone and explicit statements of the royal manifesto, to assure the colonies that the vials of British wrath were about to be opened upon them, and that any hope for an honorable reconciliation must be delusory. "These measures," Washington wrote to the president of Congress, "whatever they may be, I hope will be opposed by more vigorous ones, and rendered unavailing and fruitless, though sanctioned and authorized by the name of majesty, a name which ought to promote the happiness of his people, and not their oppression." And Greene wrote concerning the message, saying: "He breathes revenge and threatens us with destruction. America must raise an empire of permanent duration, supported upon the grand pillars of truth, freedom, and religion, based upon justice, and defended by her own patriotic sons."—"Permit me," he said, in another letter to a member of Congress, on the fourth of January, "to recommend, from the sincerity of my heart, ready at all times to bleed in my country's cause, a declaration of independence; and call upon the world, and the great God who governs it, to witness the necessity, propriety, and rectitude thereof."

Everywhere throughout the colonies similar sentiments were expressed; and the king's speech evoked from the pen of Thomas Paine, then in Philadelphia, the remarkable political pamphlet entitled "Common Sense," the name that Paine signed to his anonymous articles published in the newspapers. That pamphlet was prepared, it is said, on the suggestion of Doctor Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia. It was the earliest and most powerful appeal in behalf of independence; and, probably, did more to fix that idea firmly in the public mind than any other instrumentality. After giving many and weighty reasons why the Americans should seek independence, he said: "It matters little, now, what the king of England either says or does. He hath wickedly broken through every moral and human obligation, trampled nature and conscience

beneath his feet, and by a steady and constitutional spirit of insolence and cruelty procured for himself a universal hatred. It is now the interest of America to provide for herself.... Independence is the only *bond* that will tie and keep us together. We shall then see our object, and our ears will be legally shut against the schemes of an intriguing, as well as cruel, enemy. We shall then, too, be on a proper footing to treat with Great Britain; for there is reason to conclude, that the pride of that court will be less hurt by treating with the American states for peace, than with those whom she denominates 'rebellious subjects,' for terms of accommodation. It is our delaying it that encourages her to hope for conquest, and our backwardness tends only to prolong the war.... O ye that love mankind! ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa hath long expelled her; Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart, Oh! receive the fugitive, and prepare, in time, an asylum for mankind."

Such were the trumpet tones of "Common Sense" which aroused the people to action; and so highly was its influence esteemed, as a promoter of the Revolution, that the legislature of Pennsylvania voted the author the sum of two thousand five hundred dollars. It was the theme of conversation in every circle, and had a powerful effect in the army. Washington said, in a letter to Colonel Reed, on the thirty-first of January, 1776: "A few more of such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk (two towns burned by the British), added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning of 'Common Sense,' will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of a separation." Again, writing to the same gentleman two months later, he observed: "By private letters which I have lately received from Virginia, I find that 'Common Sense' is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men."

CHAPTER II.

WEAKNESS OF THE NEW ARMY — EXPEDIENTS FOR EQUIPPING IT — STRANGE MILITARY SPECTACLE — BOLDNESS OF THE LOYALISTS — WALLACE, THE MARAUDER — RHODE ISLAND TORIES — GENERAL LEE AMONG THEM — REMARKABLE OATH — LEE SUSTAINED — MAJOR ROGERS AND HIS MOVEMENTS — DOCTOR CONNOLLY AND LORD DUNMORE'S SCHEMES — PROCEEDINGS OF DUNMORE IN LOWER VIRGINIA — ATTACK ON HAMPTON — FREEDOM TO THE SLAVES PROCLAIMED — BATTLE AT THE GREAT BRIDGE — DESTRUCTION OF NORFOLK — NEWS OF DUNMORE'S MOVEMENTS, AT HEADQUARTERS — EFFECTS THERE — CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND HOWE CONCERNING PRISONERS — TREATMENT OF COLONEL ETHAN ALLEN.

The army over which the union flag was unfurled by order of Washington, on the first of January, 1776, had not been weaker in numbers and discipline, at any time during the blockade and siege of Boston, than on that day. The whole number of the new establishment was only nine thousand six hundred and fifty men, and more than one thousand of these were absent on furloughs, which had been granted as a consideration of enlistment. Washington had used every inducement in his power to cause those already in the field to remain. He made frequent appeals to their pride, their justice, their patriotism. All were in vain. He caused patriotic songs to be sung in camp, but they appeared to fall upon dull ears, or failed to reach the sensibilities of the hearts.* A desire

* Among the most popular of the songs that were sung in camp at that time, was one then recently written by J. W. Hewlings, a native of Nansemond, Virginia, entitled "American 'Hearts of Oak'" The first stanza gives a good idea of the spirit of the whole, and is as follows :—

"Come, rouse up, my lads, and join this great cause,
In defence of your liberty, your property, and your laws!
'T is to honor we call you, stand up for your right,
And ne'er let our foes say, we are put to the flight.
For so just is our cause, and so valiant our men,
We a'ways are ready, steady, boys, steady;
We 'll fight for our freedom again and again."

This song may be found in Moore's "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution."

for home predominated, and no other feeling could equal it in strength.

The prospect was truly discouraging to the commander-in-chief. He had been assured that the number wanted would be enlisted before the close of the year, as they were only "playing off to see what advantages were to be made, or whether a bounty could not be extorted, either from the public at large, or individuals in case of a draft."* But in this expectation Washington was disappointed; and he found himself at the head of an army weak, indeed, in the presence of one much stronger, and every day increasing in power. Many of the troops in the new army were raw recruits, ignorant of the most simple elements of military tactics, while thousands of the old regiments, who had been disciplined with care, were hurrying homeward, many of them filled with discontent because of the retention of their arms by the commander-in-chief. On account of the scarcity of muskets, the continental Congress instructed Washington to retain those belonging to soldiers who should retire. These were appraised and paid for, but the soldiers seemed to have little knowledge of the necessities that were laid upon the country by the kindling war, and murmured vehemently, regarding the Congress and the commander-in-chief as instruments of tyranny. Those who enlisted were required to bring a gun or pay one dollar for the use of one during the campaign; and he who brought a blanket was allowed two dollars. Such were some of the necessary expedients resorted to, to equip the new army; and all, at length, acquiesced in the justice of the measures.

The opening of the new year was a moment of great anxiety to Washington, for he was surrounded by a complication of difficulties which prophesied of evil, while secret and open opposition to the republican cause, through the machinations of the servants of the crown in the colonies, was hourly unfolding in more or less potency in all parts of the land. "It is easier to conceive than to describe the situation of my mind for some time past, and my feelings under present circumstances," Washington wrote to Colonel Reed, on the

* Washington to Colonel Reed.

fourth of January. "Search the volumes of history through, and I much question whether a case similar to ours is to be found, to wit: to maintain a post against the flower of the British troops for six months together, without ———,* and then to have one army disbanded and another to be raised within the same distance of a reinforced enemy. It is too much to attempt. What may be the final issue of the last manœuvre, time only can tell. I wish this month was well over our heads. The same desire to retire into a chimney-corner, seized the troops of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts (so soon as their time expired), as had worked upon those of Connecticut, notwithstanding many of them made a tender of their services to continue till their lines could be sufficiently strengthened. We are now left with a good deal less than half-raised regiments, and about five thousand militia, who only stand engaged to the middle of this month, when, according to custom, they will depart, let the necessity of their stay be ever so urgent. Thus it is, that for more than two months past I have scarcely emerged from one difficulty before I have plunged into another. How it will end, God in his great goodness will direct; I am thankful for his protection to this time. We are told that we shall soon get the army completed, but I have been told so many things which have never come to pass, that I distrust everything."†

General Greene wrote, on the same day: "We have just experienced the inconvenience of disbanding an army within cannon-shot of the enemy, and forming a new one in its stead. An instance never before known. Had the enemy been fully acquainted with our condition, I can not pretend to say what might have been the consequence."‡

The assurances in the king's speech, that a competent force to crush the rebellion would be sent over in the spring, made the American loyalists bold at the opening of the year; and, in some places where the arm of the imperial government was yet powerful,

* Powder. The word was omitted because the letter might fall into the hands of the enemy and reveal the great want.

† Life and Correspondence of President Reed, i., 141.

‡ Frothingham's "Siege of Boston," page 285.

their conduct had been exceedingly offensive, and a few tories wrought great mischief. In Rhode Island, the few adherents of the crown became particularly obnoxious on account of their support of the legalized robbery and piracy of Captain Wallace, of the frigate *Rose*, who commanded a small British fleet in Narraganset bay during the year 1775. His chief business in the autumn of that year, was to procure supplies of food for the army in Boston; and his marauding expeditions for the purpose were a disgrace to the British name. Foiled in his attempt to plunder in the vicinity of Newport, he became enraged, and threatened the town with destruction. He demanded from the people provisions for his little fleet, and to enforce his demand he cut off their supplies of fuel and provisions from the main. Many of the alarmed inhabitants fled, but finally, with the consent of the state government and the continental Congress, the people entered into a treaty with the petty sea-tyrant, to furnish him with beer and fresh provisions.

Elated with this success, Wallace, on the seventh of October, sailed up to Bristol, and demanded three hundred sheep from the inhabitants. They refused compliance, and at eight o'clock in the evening, while rain was falling copiously, he commenced a bombardment of the town. Several houses were burned, and, in the midst of the darkness, women and children fled to the open fields beyond the marauder's missiles, where they suffered terribly. For more than a month afterward, Wallace fairly revelled in wanton destruction of property. Every American vessel that came into Newport harbor was captured and sent into Boston. He plundered and burned the dwellings upon the beautiful island of Providence, in Narraganset bay; and at the close of November, he passed over to Connanicut island, opposite Newport, destroyed all the buildings near the ferry, plundered the people of their most valuable property, and carried away all the cattle upon the island.

These outrages aroused the vengeance of the people on Rhode Island, and the tory abettors of Wallace were treated with great severity. Wallace threatened the island with a dreadful scourge on that account; and the rumor went abroad, that a naval arma-

ment from Boston would soon appear in Newport harbor, to chastise the republicans. Governor Cooke wrote to Washington, requesting military aid, and the commander-in-chief sent General Lee to Newport, with a guard and a party of riflemen, to plan defensive works there. Lee passed through Providence, where he was joined by a cadet company and a number of minute-men, and, on Christmas day, they entered Newport, amid the acclamations of the suffering inhabitants.

Lee was absent from headquarters only ten days, but within that time, he not only performed the specific duties for which he was sent, but he caused the arrest of all the tories that he could find. These were summoned before him, and he sat in judgment upon their offences. They were deprived of their arms, and were compelled to sign a most humiliating oath of allegiance to the continental Congress and the state authorities. The language and scope of that oath were characteristic of the fiery adventurer who framed it. It was as follows:—

"I, ———, here, in the presence of Almighty God, as I hope for ease, honor, and comfort, in this world, and happiness in the world to come, most earnestly, devoutly, and religiously swear, that I will neither directly or indirectly assist the wicked instruments of ministerial tyranny and villany commonly called the king's troops and navy, by furnishing them with provisions and refreshments of any kind, unless authorized by the continental Congress, or legislature at present established in this particular colony of Rhode Island. I do also swear, by the Tremendous and Almighty God, that I will neither directly or indirectly convey any intelligence, nor give any advice to the aforesaid enemies described: and that I pledge myself, if I should, by any accident, get knowledge of such treasons, to inform, immediately, the committee of safety; and, as it is justly allowed, that when the rights and sacred liberties of a nation are invaded, neutrality is not less base and criminal than open and avowed hostility: I do further swear and pledge myself, as I hope for eternal salvation, that I will, whenever called upon by the voice of the continental Congress, or by that of the legislature

of this particular colony under their authority, take arms and subject myself to military discipline in defence of the common rights and liberties of America. So help me God."

Two customhouse officers and another person, refusing to sign this oath, were taken under guard to Providence, when, alarmed by the assurance that they would be conveyed to the camp at Cambridge, and properly dealt with, they reluctantly subscribed the unpleasant instrument. After this the tories in Rhode Island were circumspect and quiet, for they feared another visit from General Lee. That officer was censured by some. The continental Congress thought his measure was too high-handed, because no authority for the purpose had been given him; but Lee acted upon his avowed principle, that in revolutions all things expedient are legal. Washington, however, better acquainted with the case, approved of his conduct, and in a letter to Governor Cooke, on the sixth of January, he said: "I have seen General Lee since his expedition, and hope Rhode Island will derive some advantage from it." He then spoke of the supplying of Wallace's fleet by inhabitants of Newport, and said: "I know not what pernicious consequences may result from a precedent of this sort.... Vigorous regulations, and such as at another time would appear extraordinary, are now become absolutely necessary for preserving our country against the strides of tyranny, making against it."*

Secret emissaries were also busy in strengthening the ministerial power, in different parts of the colonies, under the directions of royal governors or other officials. In this work Major Rogers, the bold commander of a corps of rangers during the old war, and the companion of Putnam and Stark, appeared to be engaged, rather as a spy than as an active partisan. He came from England to Philadelphia in September, where he visited John and Samuel Adams with the apparent object of offering his services to the Congress. He evinced a willingness to be purchased either by Congress or the king, whichever might make the most attractive bid. "He thinks," wrote John Adams in his diary, "we shall have

* Sparks's Life and Writings of Washington, iii., 227.

Reading the Declaration of Independence to the Troops

From the painting by Frank T. Merrill

In Congress on Thursday, July 4, 1776, the colonies unanimously declared themselves Free and Independent States, and immediately thereupon the glorious message was proclaimed by the tongue of the State-house bell—Liberty Bell, as it is familiarly known, which bore the inscription, made with prophetic wisdom in 1751, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof," ordered by the Assembly of Philadelphia. The Congress ordered copies of the Declaration to be sent out to the several Assemblies, Conventions, Committees, or Councils of Safety, etc., throughout the country and to the commanders of the Continental troops.

hot work next spring. He told me an old half-pay officer, such as himself, would sell well next spring; and when he went away, he said to Samuel Adams and me, if you want me next spring for any service, you know where I am, send for me; I am to be sold." The next morning he said to Adams: "I have a hand and a heart, but I do not choose, by offering myself, to expose myself to destruction." The conduct of Rogers was so suspicious, that he was arrested the same day, by order of the Pennsylvania committee of safety, and submitted to the disposal of Congress. They ordered his release on his giving his parole that he would not serve against America during the war. He then went to New York.

Early in December, Doctor Wheelock, of Dartmouth college, communicated to Washington a rumor, that Rogers had accepted a commission in the British army, had been second in command under Carleton at Montreal, and had been through the American camp at St. John, in the disguise of an Indian. Doctor Wheelock further stated, that Rogers had lately called upon him, assured him that the Congress had urged him to take a commission from them, but being a king's officer, on half-pay, he would not accept it. About a month afterward he was at Medford, near the American camp, and sent a written request to Washington, to furnish him with a permit to travel in any part of the country. In his letter he said: "I love America; it is my native country, and that of my family, and I intend to spend the evening of my days in it." Impressed with his sincerity, Washington sent General Sullivan to examine him. As Rogers could give no good reason for his appearance at Medford, and his desire to journey through the country Washington would not allow him to enter the lines, nor would he give him a permit to travel. The following year Rogers joined the British army, notwithstanding his love for America. He was promoted to the office of colonel, and raised the eminent corps known as the Queen's Rangers, afterward commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe.*

* In January, 1776, Washington, in a letter to the president of Congress, expressed his suspicions of the professed republicanism of Rogers, and suggested that "his conduct should be at

In Virginia, where Lord Dunmore had been working against the republicans with fierce malignity, ever since his flight from Williamsburg, a secret enemy, having more dangerous designs in contemplation than any in which the mercenary Rogers appears to have been engaged, was employed. This was Doctor John Connolly, already alluded to. He was a Pennsylvanian, and for several years before the breaking out of the Revolution, he had resided at Pittsburgh. Washington had corresponded with him concerning lands in the West, and Connolly had once dined at Mount Vernon.

When the quarrel between the colonists and Great Britain waxed hot, and middle-men could not be tolerated, Connolly took the side of the crown, and became a supple tool in the hands of Lord Dunmore. They projected a scheme for the subjugation of Virginia, most wicked in conception and atrocious in details. Connolly was to raise a regiment of tories in the western country and Canada, and induce the dissatified savages in the Ohio region to co-operate with them. Detroit was to be the place of general rendezvous, and from that point the motley forces of white men and Indians were to enter Virginia on the northwest, destroy all opposers, if necessary, penetrate to Alexandria, and then, in the spring of 1776, form a junction with Dunmore, who was to ascend the Potomac with a naval armament, and another body of troops, for the complete subjugation of Virginia.

Having matured the plan, Connolly visited General Gage, at Boston, in September, 1775, to receive instructions from the commander-in-chief. Gage approved of the scheme, and Connolly returned to Virginia, where he received, from Dunmore, the com-

tended to with some degree of vigilance and circumspection." In June following, the commander-in-chief, finding him travelling through the country without any apparent object, caused him to be arrested at South Amboy, in New Jersey. When brought before Washington, at New York, he said he was travelling from his usual home in New Hampshire to Philadelphia, on business with Congress. That business, he said, was to make a secret offer of his services, to the end that, in case it should be rejected, he might have his way left open to an employment in the East Indies, to which he was assigned. Washington sent Rogers to Congress, with a suggestion, in a letter to the president, "whether it would not be dangerous to accept the offer of his services." The Congress directed him to be sent to New Hampshire. He soon afterward joined the British. In the autumn of 1776, he narrowly escaped being made a prisoner in Westchester county. Soon after the battle at Whiteplains he went to England, and Simcoe became commander of the Queen's Rangers

mission of colonel. He soon afterward set off for the Ohio country, on his important mission, with two companions (Allen Cameron and Doctor John Smythe). Near Hagarstown, in Maryland, they were arrested on suspicion and taken to Fredericton. Connolly's papers, which revealed the scheme, were concealed in the tree of his saddle. These and the prisoners were sent to Philadelphia. The Congress took possession of the papers, and ordered Connolly to be imprisoned at Baltimore. After awhile he was allowed to go on his parole within certain limits, but he was not set absolutely free until near the close of the year 1781. He several times importuned Washington for freedom, but the commander-in-chief, who had no sympathy with characters like his, always declined interfering, for he was a prisoner of the Congress, and not a prisoner-of-war.

Lord Dunmore, himself, was an active and most implacable enemy. While Washington was standing as jailor of the British army in Boston, and was preparing to drive that army away out to sea, or make the troops his prisoners, Dunmore was engaged in a cruel marauding warfare on the coasts of Virginia. We have already considered the circumstances of his flight from his palace at Williamsburg, to the *Fowey* man-of-war, in the York river. He never returned; and with all the malignity of a petty tyrant as he was, he used every means in his power to oppress and injure a people whom he had shamefully misruled and maligned.

From the *Fowey*, Dunmore sent messages to the Virginia house of burgesses, and received replies from them. These were mutually spirited and mutually irritating. Finally, the legislature having passed several bills, sent for the governor to come to Williamsburgh to sign them, assuring him that his person should be safe. He refused, and peremptorily demanded the presentation of the bills to him on board the *Fowey*. The burgesses denied his right to make such demand, and refused. Then appointing a committee of safety,* clothed with delegated powers of government, they ad-

* The committee of safety consisted of Edmund Pendleton, George Mason, John Page, Richard Bland, Thomas Ludwell Lee, Paul Carvington, Dudley Digges, James Mercer, Carter Braxton, William Cabell, and John Tabb.

journed until October. Thus terminated royal power in Virginia, and from that time the government of the state was republican in form.

The Virginia convention took immediate measures to raise an armed force for the defence of the state, while Dunmore, breathing vengeance, proceeded, in the *Fowey*, to Norfolk, where he made his headquarters. Circumstances compelled him to remain quiet for awhile, but in October he gratified his desire for revenge, by sending a small fleet to destroy the town of Hampton, near Old Point Comfort. Anticipating the movement, the inhabitants had applied to the committee of safety for succor. They sent Colonel Woodford, with one hundred picked Culpepper men to protect them.

On the twenty-fourth of October, the fleet opened a cannonade upon Hampton, and, under cover of the guns, British marines and sailors went ashore to set fire to the houses. Concealed Virginia riflemen sent death-shots among the invaders so copiously, that they were compelled to retreat, and the vessels moved further into the stream, beyond the reach of the rifle-bullets. At sunrise the next morning, the fleet bore down upon the town, and poured a heavy fire of round-shot upon it. Woodford had just arrived, and the vessels being within rifle-shot, his sure marksmen made dreadful havoc of life upon them. Men were picked off in every part of the ships, and great terror soon prevailed in the fleet. The cannon were deserted, for every gunner became a target for the riflemen. The British commander, unable to endure a fire so deadly, ordered the cables to be slipped and the vessels to retreat. This movement was difficult, for men seen at the helm, or aloft adjusting the sails, were singled out and shot down. Many of them retreated to the holds of their vessels and refused obedience to their commanders when ordered out on the perilous duty. Before the fleet could escape, the inhabitants of the town and Woodford's corps, sunk five vessels. Victory for the republicans was complete.

On hearing of this defeat, Dunmore was greatly enraged. In his broad Scotch dialect, he swore terribly, and for several days he would hardly listen to the words of his best friends. His malignity

seemed to increase with evidences of his impotency; and, on the seventh of November, he issued a proclamation declaring martial law throughout all Virginia. He unfurled the British ensign over the *Fowey*, and proclaimed freedom to all slaves who should repair to it and bear arms for the king. He sent a party into Norfolk to steal away the republican printing press.* Other parties were sent to plunder along the shores of the Elizabeth and James rivers; and at the head of a motley force of tories and negroes, Dunmore penetrated Princess Anne county, and laid waste all property in his path.

At about this time the capture of Connolly had revealed to the Virginians the wicked scheme of Dunmore to bring the savages of the forests down upon them. This revelation filled the people with burning indignation. Patrick Henry, who had been commissioned a colonel of the first regiment of militia by the committee of safety, and appointed commander-in-chief of "all the forces raised or to be raised for the defence of the colony," had summoned a corps of volunteers from various counties, to rendezvous at Williamsburg. Soon three hundred minute-men, one third of them from Culpeper county, were at the Virginia capital. The Culpeper men had a peculiarly fierce appearance. They wore green hunting-shirts, with Henry's burning words—LIBERTY OR DEATH—in large white letters upon their breasts. In their hats were bucks' tails; in their belts were tomahawks and scalping knives; and over them waved a white flag bearing the significant device of a coiled rattlesnake, and the words—*Don't tread on me!*†

William Woodford had been appointed colonel of the second regiment, with Alexander Spottswood as major, and the heroic Captain Bullit, who distinguished himself near Fort Duquesne seven years before, as adjutant-general. When Dunmore com

* John Holt, who was afterward a printer in New York, was then publishing a whig paper in Norfolk. His types and two of his workmen were carried on board of the *Fowey*. The corporation of Norfolk remonstrated against the outrage, when the governor replied, that he had done the people of the town good service by depriving them of the means of having their minds poisoned with rebellious doctrines.

† This device was upon many flags in the army and navy of the Revolution. The expression, "Don't tread on me!" had a double signification. It might be used in a supplicating tone—"*Don't* tread on me;" or, menacingly—"Don't tread on *me*."

menced his marauding operations, Woodford, accompanied by Bullit, hastened to the scene of devastation in lower Virginia. The fugitive governor was alarmed, and armed the tories and negroes who had joined his standard. He cast up batteries at Norfolk, and also at the Great Bridge over the Elizabeth river, twelve miles above the town, which was the only point where the Virginians could conveniently cross that stream. At the latter place, on the ninth of December, the Virginians and Dunmore's party (the latter consisting of two hundred regulars, a corps of Norfolk loyalists and a miserable crew of white people and negroes, recruited from the dregs of the population of both races) had a severe skirmish. The Virginians gained the victory without losing a man; while their enemy, leaving more than sixty behind them, killed, wounded, and prisoners, fled in confusion, utterly discomfited.

This second reverse in battle greatly exasperated Lord Dunmore, and in his rage at first, he swore that he would hang the boy who brought him the news of the disaster. His adherents were alarmed by the defeat, and the loyalists refused further service unless they might act with the regulars. The Virginians, on the other hand were in high spirits. Many timid persons who had rallied to the royal flag because of compulsion, joined hands with the republicans; and nine days after the battle at the Great Bridge, Woodford entered Norfolk in triumph. The next morning Colonel (afterward major-general) Robert Howe, at the head of his regiment of North Carolinians, who came up to help the Virginians in their distress, also entered Norfolk, and being superior to Woodford in rank, he took the general command of the patriot troops.

The loyalists at Norfolk now took refuge on board the British vessels, while the poor negroes who had deserted their whig masters and joined the standard of Dunmore, were left without care and protection, and many starved. At the same time the batteries on shore were abandoned, the cannon were spiked, and the active enemies of republicanism were again afloat.

Distress soon prevailed fearfully in the crowded ships, and the keen fangs of famine menaced the refugees. It was almost impos-

sible to procure food from the shore, because the republicans were alert, and cut off or drove back parties sent upon such errands; and the Virginians, with their fatal rifles, continually galled the British from the houses near the water. At this juncture, when Dunmore was about to abandon his position, the armed ship *Liverpool* came into the harbor, and for a moment upheld his weak cause. By the captain of the *Liverpool*, Dunmore sent a message to Colonel Howe, commanding him to cease firing upon the fleet, and to supply his majesty's vessels with provisions. Howe flatly refused compliance, when Dunmore threatened to destroy the town, and notified the women and children, and the friends of the king, to leave at once. Before daybreak on the morning of the first of January, 1776, that threat was executed with fearful results. At four o'clock a heavy cannonade was opened upon the town, and some sailors and marines went on shore and set fire to warehouses. The wind was fresh and favorable in its course for a general conflagration. The houses were chiefly built of pine-wood, and were highly combustible. For fifty hours the fire raged, and the wretched inhabitants, whigs and tories, saw their property and their houses licked up by the inexorable consumer; and their heads were made shelterless in the cold winter air, without the power of staying the fury of the destroyer, or saving the necessaries of life.

Not content with laying the town in ashes, the petty Nero-like tyrant, heightened the terror of the scene and the anguish of the people, by a cannonade from the ships during the conflagration. Parties of musketeers, also, went to places where the shivering people were collected, and attacked them. Horror reigned supreme, and utter desolation and destitution bore rule. Almost six thousand people were made homeless, and a million and a half dollars' worth of their property was wiped from the face of the earth. Yet a kind Providence guarded the lives of the smitten inhabitants. During the three days of terror, while the fire raged and the cannon thundered, not one of the republican troops was killed, and only three or four women and children were slain in the streets. At last the invading parties were driven back to the fleet

Dunmore and his marauders, were engaged for several months afterward in an unsuccessful amphibious warfare upon other portions of the Virginia coast.*

Intelligence of Dunmore's operations in his native colony had reached the commander-in-chief from time to time, and added to the weight of his cares, responsibilities, and anxieties. Early in December, a sloop bearing supplies, sent by Dunmore for the British army at Boston, was captured by the armed schooner *Lee*, commanded by Manly, and a letter from the royal governor to General Howe, and other papers, found on board, were sent to Washington. Dunmore's letter invited Howe to send reinforcements to Virginia, and to partly, if not entirely, transfer the war to that colony. The British general was also informed of Dunmore's intention of proclaiming freedom to the slaves. The atrocious plans revealed by this letter gave Washington much uneasiness. "If, my dear sir," he said in a letter to Richard Henry Lee, "that man is not crushed before spring, he will become the most formidable enemy America has; his strength will increase as a snowball, by rolling; and faster, if some expedient can not be hit upon to convince the slaves and servants of the impotency of his designs. You will see by his letters,† what pains he is taking to invite a reinforcement at all events there, and to transplant the war to the southern colonies. I do not think that forcing his lordship on ship-

* These movements of Lord Dunmore in lower Virginia, produced some alarm at Mount Vernon and its vicinity, for some thought the governor would sail up the Potomac, attempt the capture of Mrs. Washington, and lay Mount Vernon waste. Lund Washington wrote to the general and said: "Many people have made a stir about Mrs. Washington's continuing at Mount Vernon, but I can not think there is any danger. The thought, I believe, originated in Alexandria; from thence it got to Loudoun, and I am told the people of Loudoun talk of sending a guard to conduct her up to Berkeley, with some of their principal men to persuade her to leave this place, and accept their offer. Mr. John Augustine Washington wrote, pressing her to leave Mount Vernon. She does not believe herself in danger. Lord Dunmore will hardly himself venture up this river; nor do I believe he will send on that errand. Surely her old acquaintance, the attorney, who, with his family, is on board his ship, would prevent his doing an act of that kind. You may depend I will be watchful, and, upon the least alarm, persuade her to remove."—Sparks, iii., 196.

† Washington sent the intercepted letters to the president of Congress. That body, on the fourth of December, had, by resolution, recommended the inhabitants of Virginia "to resist to the utmost the arbitrary government intended to be established therein by their governor, Lord Dunmore, as manifestly appears by the whole tenor of his lordship's conduct for some months past."—Journals, i., 260. The Congress also fitted out a small fleet to oppose Dunmore in the Virginia waters. That enterprise we shall consider hereafter.

board is sufficient; nothing less than depriving him of life or liberty will secure peace to Virginia, as motives of resentment actuate his conduct, to a degree equal to the total destruction of the colony."

General Lee also wrote to his Virginia namesake on the same subject, and in few words developed the plan which he thought would be the best policy to pursue toward the enemies of the country. He proposed to seize them and confiscate their property, or at least "lay them under heavy contributions for the public."

A little earlier than the interception of Dunmore's letter, Washington had received at headquarters, a dangerous tory of South Carolina, named Moses Kirkland, who had been captured on his voyage to Boston. He had been employed by Stuart, the British Indian agent with the Creeks and Cherokees, and was on his way to Boston to concert with General Gage a plan for an attack on the southern states. The papers and letters of Stuart, which he bore, revealed the whole plan, which was for the royal forces to operate by sea, and the savages, under the direction of Stuart, by land. Among the papers were letters from Tonyn, the governor of Florida, at St. Augustine, which showed the weakness of that post. This was an important arrest; and Washington, in a letter to the president of Congress, on the eighteenth of December, after remarking that he had "Kirkland well secured," said: 'Indeed, these papers are of so great consequence, that I think this but little inferior to any prize our famous Manly has taken."

The harsh treatment which Colonel Ethan Allen suffered at the hands of the British in Canada (information of which had reached Washington at about this time) justified even more rigorous measures toward the enemies of the cause than the holding of important men as hostages, over whom should hang the fate to which American prisoners might be subjected.

At about the middle of December, Washington was truly informed, that Colonel Allen had been thrust into the hold of the Gaspé, at Montreal, heavily ironed, and treated without regard to decency, humanity, or the rules of war. He addressed a letter to General Howe on the eighteenth, in which he demanded his imme-

diate attention to the subject, saying: "From the character which Mr. Howe bears as a man of honor, gentleman, and soldier, I flatter myself that my demand will meet with his approbation. I take the liberty, also," he continued, "of informing you, that I shall consider your silence as a confirmation of the report; and further assuring you, that, whatever treatment Colonel Allen receives, whatever fate he undergoes, such, exactly, shall be the treatment and fate of Brigadier-General Prescott, now in our hands." After speaking of the justice of the law of retaliation, in this case, and the duty which the Americans owed to their friends in captivity, he alluded to the noble personal qualities of General Howe and said, in allusion to his brother, who was killed near Ticonderoga: "The Americans, in general, esteem it as not the least of their misfortunes, that the name of a Howe, a name so dear to them, should appear at the head of the catalogue of the instruments employed by a wicked ministry for their destruction."

General Howe, in reply, informed Washington that he had no jurisdiction in the matter, as his command did not extend to Canada; and then, as in duty bound, evinced his loyalty to his employers by resenting the conclusion of Washington's letter, as "big with invective" against his superiors, insulting to himself, and a cause for obstructing any further intercourse between the two commanders. But Washington's letter had the desired effect. On the very next day Howe wrote to Lord Dartmouth, and said: "Mr. Washington, presuming upon the number and rank of the prisoners in his possession, has threatened retaliation in point of treatment to any prisoners of theirs in our power." This information was full of significant warning to the haughty ministry, and Colonel Allen, who had been frequently threatened, on his voyage to England as a rebel captive, with a ride to Tyburn hill in the hangman's cart, was treated with leniency on his arrival, as a prisoner-of-war.

CHAPTER III.

A SECRET EXPEDITION IN PREPARATION — SPECULATIONS CONCERNING IT — LETTER FROM LONDON — DESIGNS AGAINST NEW YORK AND THE HUDSON RIVER REGION — TRYON'S MOVEMENTS — CAPTAIN SEARS IN CAMP — HIS FORAY UPON RIVINGTON — HIS PLAN FOR SECURING THE TORIES, APPROVED BY WASHINGTON AND LEE — WASHINGTON'S CAUTION — LEE SENT TO CONNECTICUT — HIS INSTRUCTIONS — HIS MOVEMENTS THERE — CO-OPERATION OF GOVERNOR TRUMBULL — ALARM IN NEW YORK — TIMIDITY OF THE COMMITTEE OF SAFETY — FLIGHT OF TORIES — TROOPS ENTER THE CITY — SIR HENRY CLINTON IN THE HARBOR — HIS PEACEFUL PROFESSIONS AND DEPARTURE.

The resolution of the continental Congress, adopted on the twenty-second of December, authorizing Washington to attack Boston in any manner he might think expedient, notwithstanding the town and property in it might thereby be destroyed, reached him at the beginning of January. This resolution gave strength to his own inclinations, and he determined, weak as his army was in numbers, to make an effort speedily to drive the enemy out of the New England capital. Recent movements of that enemy conspired to strengthen this resolution, and urged Washington to the execution of his designs as early as possible. At the close of December, he was assured that General Howe was fitting out a part of his fleet in Boston harbor for some secret enterprise, to be under the command of Sir Henry Clinton. At first it was thought by some, that Rhode Island and the coasts of Connecticut were its destination, but the season of the year (the bays and harbors being filled with ice) rendered such an expedition improbable. Finally, it became evident that the coasts of the southern states were to be the chief theatre of its operations.

Knowing the defenceless condition of the city of New York; the restraints under which the inhabitants of that town were kept

by the presence of the British man-of-war in the harbor, with the royal governor, Tryon, on board; and the desire of the imperial government to separate New England from the other colonies, by establishing a chain of military connection between New York and Canada, Washington apprehended that Sir Henry might first enter the waters around Manhattan island, and take possession of that key to the interior.*

As early as the fifth of October, a letter had been laid before the continental Congress, written by a well-informed person in London, which revealed a secret plan of operations formed by the ministry, and which had been sent to General Howe. It proposed to first secure possession of New York city, by the aid of Governor Tryon and the tory population, and next the city of Albany. Rigorous measures were to be used toward those who did not join the king's troops. They were to be declared rebels, and treated as such. The Hudson river, the East river, and the Sound, were to be held in possession by small armed vessels; and all communication was to be cut off between the province of New York and those of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and consequently with all south of them. By these means the ministry and their friends expected to either starve the garrisons or retake the forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and open a safe intercourse between New York, Albany, and Quebec. "Thereby," said the writer, "they would offer the fairest opportunity to their soldiery and Canadians, in conjunction with the Indians to be procured by Guy Johnson, to make continual irruptions into New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, and so distract and divide the provincial forces, as to render it easy for the British army at Boston to defeat them, break the spirit of the Massachusetts people, depopulate their country, and compel an absolute subjection to Great Britain."†

The warnings of this letter were heeded by the Congress, and on

* An Iroquois chief, who, long before the Revolution, chalked out, for a British officer, a sketch of the features of the inland country, said, with jealous air but prophetic words, that Louisburg was one of the keys to it, and New York another, and that the power which might hold both would open the great chest and have Indians and all.—Smith's History of New York, ii., 181.

† American Archives, 4th series, iii., 1281.

Uniform of Continental Soldiers (Pennsylvania Line)

From the painting by Gilbert Gaul

Early in the Revolutionary War there was no regular uniform for the army. The different regiments and battalions adopted a pattern for themselves, although among the Pennsylvania troops the prevailing uniform was, perhaps, brown with red or white and sometimes blue facings. The colors of Washington and his staff were blue and buff. It was not until 1779 that black and red had been selected as the uniform of the Continental army. In that year and the next the Pennsylvania line seems to have more generally adopted a blue uniform with buff or white, and occasionally red facings.

the seventh, that body ordered—"That the provincial convention of New York be directed immediately to render Hudson's river defensible;" to inquire into the best points whereon to erect small batteries, "so as to annoy the enemy on their passage;" to establish, "at proper distances, posts to be ready to give intelligence to the country in case of any invasion;" and "to take the most effectual method to obstruct the navigation of the said river, if, upon examination, they find it practicable."*

It was well known, at this time, that the machinations of Tryon were producing continual distractions in the politics of New York. He managed to keep together a large body of open and secret tories on Long Island; and by many artful intrigues and false promises, he encouraged the friends of the king in the interior to stand by their faith, while the Johnson family were busily engaged in winning the Six Nations of Indians over to the royal side.

These circumstances placed the whigs in New York in a dilemma that made them ever cautious and sometimes timid, for they knew not how extensive tory disaffection to the republican cause might be. This caution was misconstrued by loyalists as a hopeful hesitancy, if not an actual change of opinions; and from the cabin of the *Duchess of Gordon*, Tryon wrote to Howe, on the thirteenth of December, that the spirit of rebellion was decreasing in the colony of New York, and that five thousand troops could easily restore commerce and the royal government there. He offered to take the field, against the rebels, under Clinton; and expressed his belief that he could raise from two to three thousand tories, provided they could be put upon the regular establishment. He requested Howe to send him three thousand muskets with which to arm them, and a hundred thousand cartridges; and concluded his letter by saying, that in his present condition he saw no prospect of getting ashore to resume his government.

Howe declined sending troops because he could not spare them, before spring; and he also declined sending the arms and ammunition then, because he thought such a movement, made before the

* Journals of Congress, i., 199.

weapons could be used, would only serve to alarm and strengthen the insurgents. There can be no doubt, however, that Howe instructed Sir Henry Clinton to look into the harbor of New York, on his way south, consult with Tryon, and attack or spare the city as circumstances should dictate.

The more Washington reflected upon the expedition fitting out in Boston harbor, the stronger was his conviction that New York would be the first point of attack. The warning given to the Congress by the London letter, had awakened many anxious thoughts in his mind; and as opening events confirmed the assertions of the writer, he felt more and more impatient to strike the enemy in Boston a fatal blow, and then hasten westward to frustrate the designs of the government against the province of New York. But prudence would not allow him to detach a portion of his army for that purpose, while the enemy before him was increasing in strength; nor would prudence allow him to strike that enemy until fully prepared to give an effectual blow.

Captain Isaac Sears, one of the earliest and boldest of the Sons of Liberty in New York, who, from the period of the Stamp-act excitement until the time in question, had been distinguished there for his uncompromising and active hostility to the servants of the crown, and their abettors, was now in Washington's camp, and had laid before him a feasible scheme (which he had already proposed to leading men in Connecticut) for disarming the tories in the city of his adoption, and strengthening the republican cause there.

The timid proceedings of the provincial Congress of New York during the summer of 1775; the evident increase in the number of loyalists in that province, and the insolent abuse which Rivington, the tory printer, had poured upon Sears and his political friends, goaded him on to the perpetration of an act, justified, perhaps, by the exigencies of the times, but which was severely condemned by the friends of the crown, and the conservative whigs, while it was loudly applauded by the zealous republicans. Sears went into his native colony of Connecticut, raised a company of one hundred horsemen, led them toward New York, entered the

city at noonday, on the twenty-third of November, at the head of his troops, proceeded to the printing office of Rivington, at the foot of Wall street, placed a guard with fixed bayonets around it, put all the types into bags, destroyed the presses and other apparatus, and then, in the same order, amid the shouts of the populace, left the city, cheered by the tune of Yankee Doodle. On their way back to Connecticut, the invaders disarmed every tory in their path, and taking with them the Reverend Samuel Seabury (a high-church clergyman), and two other loyalists, carried them in triumph to New Haven. There Rivington's types were cast into bullets.

Elated with this success, Sears wrote a letter to three of the Connecticut delegates in the continental Congress (Sherman, Dyer, and Deane), recommending the adoption of a similar system for the general disarming of the tories in New York and elsewhere. He expressed an opinion that a regiment of five hundred men might be raised for the purpose, in Connecticut, in the course of two days, if the enterprise should be sanctioned by the Congress, and that five hundred Sons of Liberty in New York would join them. He remarked: "We have little else to do this winter but to purge the land of such villains."* But Sears appears not to have been successful in that quarter; and being disappointed in his expectations of having the command of the little fleet then fitting out at Philadelphia, to cruise off the southern coasts,† he repaired to headquarters, at Cambridge, in December, to lay his scheme for disarming the tories before the commander-in-chief. He portrayed the critical situation of New York;‡ and he proposed that Wash

* Hollister's History of Connecticut, ii., 241.

† "I have heard," he said, "that the command of the ships fitting out at Phila. is to be given to Captain Hopkins, which I am much surprised at, for I judged that that department was for me, which I had reason to expect from the hints given me by many members of the Congress; but it is too often the case, when a man has done the most he gets the least rewards. It is not for the lucre of gain that I want the command of a squadron in the American navy, but it is because I know myself capable of the station, and because I think I can do my country more service in that department than in any other."—*Sears's Letter to Sherman, Dyer, and Deane.*

‡ On the twenty-seventh of December, a whig in New York wrote to his friend in Connecticut, and said: "Just after you left town, the *Phœnix*, a forty-gun ship, arrived and anchored just before Mr Drakes, and in two or three days after, the *Asia*, in company with the *Duchess of Gordon*, came and anchored opposite to Peck's slip, so that we are highly honored. General Dalrymple is on board the *Phœnix*, and it is rumored that they have two hundred troops concealed on board which has for near a week past, kept us on pretty hard duty."

ington should write to Governor Trumbull, asking him to raise two regiments for the work of humbling the servants and friends of the crown in that province.

Washington thought favorably of Sears's plan, and took it into consideration; and just as General Lee was departing for Newport, Sears gained the ear and favorable consideration of that officer. Lee wrote to Washington immediately after his return to camp, and said: "The consequences of the enemy's possessing themselves of New York have appeared to me so terrible, that I have scarcely been able to sleep from apprehensions on the subject. These apprehensions daily increase. You have it in your power, at present, to prevent this dreadful event.... New York must be secured; but it will never, I am afraid, be secured by direct order of the Congress, for obvious reasons.... I am sensible that no men can be spared from the lines in our present circumstances; but I would propose that you should detach me into Connecticut, and lend your name for collecting a body of volunteers." He said he had been assured that there would be no difficulty in assembling a sufficient number in Connecticut, and these acting, if necessary, with some Jersey troops under Lord Stirling, would effect the security of New York, "and the expulsion or suppression of that dangerous banditti of tories, who have appeared in Long Island, with the professed intention of acting against the authority of the Congress. Not to crush these serpents," he said, "before their rattles are grown, would be ruinous." Lee concluded by urging Washington to put the plan into immediate execution, if it should meet with his approbation. "The sooner it is entered upon the better," he said; "indeed the delay of a single day may be fatal."

Washington felt the necessity of immediate action as keenly as Lee, but aware of the carefulness of the Congress not to interfere unnecessarily with the immediate concerns of the respective colonies; and also sensible of the existing jealousy of military power he was unwilling to take the absolute responsibility of exceeding his instructions. He felt the truth of Lee's remarks, that the best members of Congress expected that he would take much upon

himself, as referring every matter of importance to them, was, in fact, defeating the project. "Your situation is such," said Lee, argumentatively, "that the salvation of the whole depends on your striking, at certain crises, vigorous strokes, without previously communicating your intentions." But the cautious Washington was wiser than his impetuous adviser, and immediately addressed John Adams, then at Watertown, on the subject, asking his opinion of the expediency and practicability of the plan, and whether it might not be regarded as beyond his line of duty.

Adams made a prompt reply. He heartily approved of the enterprise, and gave his reasons at some length. He believed it to be feasible; and as the city and province of New York formed a sort of key to the whole continent, in its present political aspect, the Hudson river being a passage to Canada, to the great lakes, and to all the Indian nations, he thought that no efforts should be spared to secure that region. He considered it perfectly clear that such an enterprise was within the limits of Washington's command, for if a body of armed people on Long Island were opposing the republican cause, and were furnishing the British army and navy with supplies, "no man," he said, "can hesitate to say, that this is an hostile invasion of American liberty, as much as that now made in Boston." And if there were a body of tories in the city of New York waiting only for the protection of British arms to cause them to become open and active enemies of the Congress, it was high time, he said, that the city was secured. "Upon the whole, sir," he remarked in conclusion, "my opinion is, that General Lee's is a very useful proposal, and will answer many good ends."*

Thus advised by one of the most influential of the members of the continental Congress, Washington felt that he had semi-official sanction, and acted accordingly. He immediately drew up instructions for Lee, and despatched him to Connecticut to carry out the proposed plan. After cautiously recounting the causes which led to the expedition, in the form of a preamble, he said in the instructions: "You will, therefore, with such volunteers as are willing to

* Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, i., 113

join you, and can be expeditiously raised, repair to the city of New York; and calling upon the commanding officer of the forces of New Jersey for such assistance as he can afford, and you shall require, you are to put that city into the best posture of defence, which the season and circumstances will admit, disarming all such persons upon Long Island and elsewhere (and, if necessary, otherwise securing them), whose conduct and declarations have rendered them justly suspected of designs unfriendly to the views of Congress.

"You are, also," he continued, "to inquire into the state and condition of the fortifications up the North river, and as far as shall be consistent with the orders of Congress, or not repugnant to them, to have the works guarded against surprises from a body of men, which might be transported by water near the place, and then marched in upon the back of them." Then referring him to Captain Sears for information respecting medicines, shirts, and blankets then in New York, he instructed Lee to secure and forward them to headquarters. The minute practical details of the expedition he left to Lee's judgment. He concluded by cautiously advising him to dismiss the volunteers as soon as the service upon which they were called would admit of it; and directed him to be in readiness, at all times, to join the army at Boston, if the exigency of affairs there should call for it.

These instructions were evidently not strong enough for the impetuous and reckless spirit of Lee, for in a letter to the president of Congress, written soon after receiving them, he expressed an opinion that the scheme of only *disarming* the tories would prove inefficient in effecting the security of the province, because the enemy would supply them with arms whenever it became necessary to do so. The moderation and prudence of Washington appeared, to his unwise judgment, like timidity, if not actual folly. He had no confidence in sermons of any kind, much less in any political discourses or arguments that the republicans might address to the friends of the king. "The plan of explaining to these deluded people the justice of the American cause," he said, "is certainly

generous and humane, but I am afraid will be fruitless. They are so riveted in their opinions, that I am persuaded, should an angel descend from heaven with his golden trumpet, and ring in their ears that their conduct was criminal, he would be disregarded."

Lee was favorable to the employment of measures similar to those used by himself at Newport, a few days before. He proposed taking away the arms of the tories for the use of the patriots—appraising their estates and appropriating a certain share to the public use by the process of confiscation, or holding it as a pledge of their good behavior—compelling them to take an oath like the one he had administered to the Rhode Island tories, and sending all refractory ones into the interior.

Fortunately for the colonists, Lee was not commander-in-chief. He aspired to that responsible position; and, perhaps, even as early as this, he had resolved to gain that proud eminence or desert and betray the cause, for he was a mere military adventurer.* But he was compelled to be governed by the more thoughtful and sagacious spirit of Washington; and he left Cambridge on the eleventh of January (three days after receiving his instructions), bearing a letter to Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut, and another to the committee of safety at New York, then sitting with the delegated powers of the provincial convention of that colony, during its recess.†

* Positive evidence of General Lee's treasonable designs against the liberties of the colonists, in 1777, will be given in the appropriate place on future pages of this work. That evidence exists, in the handwriting of Lee himself.

† The provincial convention of New York adjourned on the twenty-second of December, 1775, and reassembled on the twelfth of February, 1776. Washington, in his letter to the committee of safety, after informing them of the fitting out of a fleet in Boston harbor, and the embarkation of troops; and suggesting, that inasmuch as loyalists on Long Island were doubtless prepared to co-operate with a British force against the republicans, and that the expedition was intended to operate against New York, he said:—

"I have, therefore, thought it expedient to despatch Major-General Lee, with such volunteers as he can quickly assemble on his march (for I have not troops to spare from hence, if the distance and time would admit of it), in order to put the city of New York in the best posture of defence the season and circumstances will admit of. To his instructions, which I have desired him to lay before you, I shall beg leave to refer, firmly persuaded that your Honorable Body will give every assistance in their power to facilitate the end of his coming, as there needs no other argument than a retrospective view of the conduct of the ministerial troops in Boston, and the consequences resulting from it, to prove what a fatal stab it would give to the interests of America, to suffer the city of New York to fall into the hands of our enemy."

Captain Sears having accomplished his errand to the camp, was sent forward in advance, with despatches for Governor Trumbull, and when Lee arrived at New Haven, active preparations for furnishing the requisite number of troops were in progress. Vigorous measures had already been adopted by the Connecticut assembly toward the close of December, and prepared the way for Lee's enterprise. They had passed an act for raising and equipping one fourth of the militia; another for restraining and punishing active tories, and those who should furnish supplies to the army and navy of Great Britain; and another for seizing and confiscating the property of those who should give aid and comfort to the enemy. A regiment had also been raised and equipped, pursuant to an order of the continental Congress, and placed under the command of Colonel Waterbury, to attack a body of loyalists at Oyster bay, on Long Island, in conjunction with a regiment under Colonel Heard, of Lord Stirling's New Jersey brigade.* But just as this regiment was about to embark, an order to disband it was received from the continental Congress; and so, said Lee, in a letter to Washington, from New Haven, "the tories are to remain unmolested till they are joined by the king's assassins." This gave Lee an opportunity to indulge his propensity for fault-finding, and a display of his impatience. Referring to the order for disbanding Waterbury's regiment, he said: "I am apprehensive that the Congress must be inspired by you. They have just given a strong, and, I think, unfortunate instance of indecision.... Governor Trumbull, like a man of sense and spirit, has ordered this regiment to be reassembled. I believe it will be ready on Sunday, the day on which I shall march from this town. I shall send immediately an express to the Congress, informing them of my situation, and, at the same time, conjuring them not to suffer the accursed provincial Congress of New York to defeat measures so absolutely necessary to salvation."†

On the arrival of Captain Sears at New Haven, Governor Trum-

* January 3, 1776. Journals of Congress, ii., 10.
† Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, i. 124.

bull convened the committee of safety, laid before them the despatches from the commander-in-chief, and with their hearty concurrence, he ordered two regiments, under the respective command of Colonels Waterbury and Ward, to reassemble and repair to Stamford, within fifty miles of New York, and put themselves under General Lee. By the twenty-second of the month, no less than twelve hundred Connecticut troops had collected there, and Captain Sears was made adjutant-general. But Lee was detained by an attack of the gout, for several days, and there was, consequently, considerable delay. Meanwhile, Colonel Waterbury went to New York to consult with the Sons of Liberty there, and with the whig members of the committee of safety; and there, on the twenty-eighth, he had an interview with a committee of the continental Congress, appointed two days before, "to repair to New York, to consult and advise with the council of safety of that colony, and with General Lee, respecting the immediate defence of the city of New York."*

As early as the twenty-first, a well-authenticated rumor, that Lee was in Connecticut raising troops for active operations in New York, reached that city. It produced great alarm among the inhabitants and excited the fears of a majority of the committee of safety. British armed vessels were in the harbor keeping watch and ward over the town where rebellion was known to be rife; and a royal governor was among them, encouraging and strengthening active and vigilant tories within and without the city, while in military defences New York was very weak. It was apprehended that the approach of Lee with troops, would be the signal for the ships-of-war to open a destructive fire upon the town; and taking counsel of their fears, quite a number of tories fled to Long Island and New Jersey, with their families and effects. Others, both whigs and tories, who remained, clammered so loudly at the ear of the committee of safety, that Peter Van Brugh Livingston, their chairman, addressed a letter to General Lee, at Stamford, on the same

* The committee consisted of Messrs. Harrison, Lynch, and Allen.—See Journals of Congress, January 26, 1776.

day, inquiring into his motives for coming with an army to New York, and confessing the utter inability of the people of the city to sustain an attack from the ships-of-war. He suggested the impropriety of provoking hostilities in less than six weeks, when they hoped to have sufficient military works and other provisions for defence, so complete that they might face the enemy "with some countenance." He expressed, in behalf of his constituents, an ardent wish "to save appearances with the ships-of-war," and to remain at peace for a little time; and concluded by saying: "Should you have such an entrance in design, we beg, at least, that the troops may halt on the western confines of Connecticut, till we have been honored by you with such explanations of this important subject, as you conceive your duty may permit you to enter into with us, the grounds of which you will easily see ought to be kept an entire secret."

This letter was sent express to General Lee, by Gerret Vanderburgh, and, on the twenty-third, he made a characteristic reply. After remarking that he should have apprized them of his movement, had he not supposed that information of the enterprise had been communicated to them from a higher source, he disclaimed all intention to commence hostilities against the men-of-war in the harbor, the motive of Washington in detaching him being solely to prevent the enemy making a lodgment in the city or upon Long Island. Thus far his letter was sufficiently pacific, but the strongest apprehensions were awakened when he added: "If the ships-of-war are quiet, I shall be quiet; but I declare, solemnly, that if they make a pretext of my presence to fire on the town, the first house set in flames by their guns, shall be the funeral pile of some of their best friends." These fears were allayed, however, by his solemn assurance, that pursuant to their request, he should leave his main body on the western frontiers of Connecticut, and enter the town with only a force strong enough to "secure it against any designs of the enemy, until it shall please the continental Congress to take measures for its permanent security."*

* Journals of the New York Committee of Safety, 259, 266

On the following day Lee wrote a cheering letter to Washington. "I find the people through this province" (Connecticut), he said, "more alive and zealous than my most sanguine expectation. I believe I might have collected ten thousand volunteers." He then referred to his letter to the committee of safety at New York, and remarked: "The whigs, I mean the stout ones, are, it is said, very desirous that a body of troops should march and be stationed in their city. The timid ones are averse, merely from the spirit of procrastination, which is the characteristic of timidity. The letter of the provincial Congress, you will observe, breathes the very essence of this spirit. It is wofully hysterical."*

Unable to proceed as soon as he wished, General Lee sent forward Captain Sears, with Colonel Waterbury's regiment, seven hundred strong, with orders to enter the city of New York immediately. At the King's bridge, which connected Manhattan island with the main in Westchester county, Sears was met by a large number of citizens, who entreated him not to cross. This exhibition of timidity only incensed that zealous patriot, and pleading his orders as a sufficient warrant for his acts, he marched on as rapidly as possible. Meanwhile, the delegates sent by the continental Congress to confer with General Lee, had consulted with members of the New York committee of safety and Colonel Waterbury, and it was resolved that the troops should enter the city, and be quartered in the barracks. But their near approach, with the bold Sears at their head, renewed the fears of many of the inhabitants, and again there was a flight of tories, for these perplexed people remembered his foray upon Rivington, a few weeks before, and dreaded his indignation and power.†

* In this letter, Lee said: "Have you seen the pamphlet 'Common Sense'? I never saw such a masterly, irresistible performance. It will, if I mistake not, in concurrence with the transcendent folly and wickedness of the ministry, give the *coup de grace* to Great Britain. In short, I own myself convinced by the arguments, of the necessity of separation." He added — "Poor Montgomery! But it is not a time to cry, but to revenge. God bless you, my dear general, and crown us with the success I am sure we merit, from the goodness of our cause. My love to the ladies."

† Isaac Sears was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, in 1729. His ancestors, who were among the earliest emigrants to Massachusetts, were from Colchester, England, and came to Plymouth in 1630. Mr. Sears was a successful merchant in New York, engaged in the European and West India trade, when political matters attracted his attention. When the Stamp-Act aroused the colonists, Sears

General Lee soon followed, having been carried most of the way in a litter; and, on Sunday, the fourth of February, he was with the troops in their encampment in the 'Fields," now the City-hall park. On the same morning, news came from men whom the committee of safety had stationed at the Narrows to watch for the expected British fleet, that two vessels over which floated the red cross of St. George, were off Sandy Hook; and at about the same hour when Lee entered the city, the armed ship *Mercury* came into the harbor, bearing Sir Henry Clinton, on a professedly friendly visit to Governor Tryon, who was yet a fugitive on board the *Duchess of Gordon.* Again there was another flight of citizens from the town which they now considered doomed. "All that day, and all night," says a letter of the time, "were the carts going and boats loading, and women and children crying, and distressed voices heard in the roads in the dead of the night."

Sir Henry Clinton, perceiving how unpromising New York appeared at that moment as an object for attack and conquest, sent for Mayor Mathews, and expressed his surprise and sorrow that his visit should have been productive of alarm and confusion. He had merely come to have a few words of kindly greeting with his friend Tryon. He brought no troops with him, he said, and he pledged his word that none were coming: and he hoped the people would consider him their cordial friend. No doubt the presence of Lee in the city, with a goodly band of armed republicans within call, together with that officer's manifesto on his arrival, declaring, that if the ships-of-war should set a house on fire, he would chain a hundred loyalists by the neck, and make that house their funeral-pile, produced all this civility and peaceful professions on the part of Sir Henry. So, when he became satisfied that he could win

stood forth as the champion of right, and was one of the boldest, most persevering, and zealous members of the association of the Sons of Liberty. He was an active whig during the whole war; and when it was ended, his business and his fortune had disappeared. Before the war he had been much upon the sea, having commanded one of his own vessels engaged in the West India trade. In 1785, we find him on the ocean again, as a supercargo, bound for Canton, with others engaged in the venture. When the vessel arrived at Canton, Sears was very ill with fever, and on the twenty-eighth of October, 1785, he died there, at the age of nearly fifty-seven years. He was buried upon French island, and his fellow-voyagers placed a slab, with a suitable inscription, over his grave.

neither victory nor honor by an attack upon New York, he frankly avowed his destination to be the southern coasts, where he expected to be joined by a British fleet and some land troops. He then sailed for a more congenial climate; but precisely because he openly declared that he was going southward, nobody believed him.

Lee made his headquarters at the house number 1, Broadway,* and at once began a vigorous prosecution of the errand on which he had been sent. He commenced the erection of fortifications near the city, made loyalists subscribe stringent oaths, and strengthened weak and timid whigs by his words and example; and before he left, in pursuit of Clinton, a few weeks afterward, his presence had produced such an effect upon the public mind, that the provincial convention of New York was well purged of the leaven of toryism.

We will now resume the consideration of the siege of Boston.

* That house, yet (1858) standing, was built by Captain Kennedy, of the royal navy, at about the time of his marriage with his first wife, the daughter of Colonel Peter Schuyler, of New Jersey, in April, 1765. There Washington, also, made a brief residence, in the spring of 1776; and afterward the house was occupied by Sir Henry Clinton, and Generals Robertson and Carleton. There, also, Major André wrote his celebrated letter to Arnold, which he signed "John Anderson."

CHAPTER IV.

WASHINGTON'S EXPERIENCES — UNPLEASANT INTELLIGENCE — TARDINESS OF ENLISTMENTS — WASHINGTON'S PERPLEXITIES — COUNCILS-OF-WAR — ATTACK ON THE ENEMY POSTPONED — THE BRITISH IN BOSTON — AMUSEMENTS — KNOWLTON'S EXPLOIT — A FARCE CHANGED INTO A TRAGEDY — VEXATIOUS DELAYS — PATRIOTIC SENTIMENTS — YEARNINGS FOR INDEPENDENCE — DAWNING OF LIGHT — PROSPECTS IMPROVING — ANOTHER COUNCIL-OF-WAR — WASHINGTON DISSATISFIED — PHILLIS WHEATLEY, THE BLACK POETESS, AND THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

WASHINGTON'S experiences during a fortnight in the month of January, 1776, were remarkably impressive, and formed severe tests of his character. Events the most momentous, connected with his leadership, were crowded into that space of time; and no other than a well-balanced mind, and a spirit full of faith in God's providential care would have preserved that calmness, dignity, and self-possession, for which he was so remarkable, during his conflict with complicated trials at that time.

From the North came intelligence of sad disasters at Quebec, the death of the gallant Montgomery, the severe wounds of the intrepid Arnold, and the captivity of some of the bravest soldiers who had taken up arms for their country. From the South came news of the depredations of Dunmore, the conflagration of Norfolk, and the exposure of the whole coast of his dear Virginia to the fire, and sword, and plundering hand of an implacable marauder, while the little fleet destined to smite the miscreant, was fast bound in ice at Philadelphia. From the Congress came significant hints, that the ministerial troops in Boston ought to be attacked without delay; while the army that was to perform the service was yet comparatively weak in numbers, and illy supplied with the necessary imple-

ments and materials for siege-service, or the more active operations of an assault. From every point along the New England coast came appeals for succor that could not be answered with power; and the provincial assembly of Massachusetts, whose members knew better than any other officials on the continent, outside of the camp, the real situation of Washington, actually complained, in jealous tones, of his having slighted that body, because he did not reveal all his plans to them, and ask their advice before making any movement! "They could not surely conceive," he said, in a letter to Colonel Reed on the fourteenth of January, "that there was a propriety in unbosoming the secrets of an army to them, that it was necessary to ask their opinion of throwing up intrenchments, forming a battalion, &c., &c."

Discontented officers appear to have cast impediments in the way of recruiting, and at the middle of January, enlistments were at a stand. During the first two weeks of the year, only about one thousand men were recruited. Although the number of the troops, on paper, was ten thousand five hundred, many of them had never joined the army, and, probably, they never would have done so, had not the commander-in-chief issued peremptory orders, requiring all officers, under pain of being cashiered, and recruits as being treated as deserters, to join their respective regiments by the first day of February. The time for which the militia, who had come in to fill up the regiments temporarily while the recruiting was going on, was just expiring, and few were expected to remain beyond the time.

Such was Washington's condition with respect to men. With regard to arms he was still worse off. Notwithstanding various expedients and great efforts had been used to furnish the soldiers with arms, they were sadly deficient, and at the middle of January there were not one hundred spare muskets in the stores. More could not readily be found. Washington had made repeated applications near and far away, for arms, but to little purpose, and he almost despaired of equipping the soldiers as they came tardily in. No wonder that his great heart was stirred with anxious sorrow as

he surveyed the scene around him, and contemplated the cause of his country in the gloomy light of present reality. While he presented a cheerful countenance, and uttered none but words of encouragment, in public, he sometimes revealed the bitterness of his soul in moments of human weakness, to his bosom friends. Thus to Colonel Reed, whom he regarded with tenderness and confidence at that time, he said: "The reflection upon my situation, and that of this army, produces many an uneasy hour, when all around me are wrapped in sleep. Few people know the predicament we are in, on a thousand accounts—fewer still will believe, if any disaster happens to these lines, from what cause it flows. I have often thought how much happier I should have been, if instead of accepting of a command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket upon my shoulder, and entered the ranks; or, if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country, and lived in a wigwam. If I shall be able to rise superior to these, and many other difficulties which might be enumerated, I shall most religiously believe that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemies; for surely, if we get well through this month, it must be for want of their knowing the disadvantages we labor under."

"Could I have foreseen the difficulties which have come upon us," he continued, "could I have known that such a backwardness would have been discovered in the old soldiers to the service, all the generals upon earth should not have convinced me of the propriety of delaying an attack upon Boston till this time. When it can now be attempted, I will not undertake to say, but this much I will answer for, that no opportunity can present itself earlier than my wishes."*

The winter that set in with severity became mild, and the ice-bridge over the landward waters around Boston, on which Washington relied for a safe passage of his troops in an attack upon the city, was not created by the frost until near the middle of February. "The bay is open," wrote Colonel Moylan, early in January: "every-

* Life and Correspondence of President Reed, i., 144.

things thaws here, except Old Put. He is still as hard as ever, crying out for powder, powder, ye gods, give us powder!"

Washington became impatient with an irrepressible desire to commence active hostilities, and on the sixteenth of January, he called a council of war, to the members of which the general stated it to be, "in his judgment, indispensably necessary to make a bold attempt to conquer the ministerial troops in Boston, before they could be reinforced in the spring, if the means could be provided, and a favorable opportunity should offer," and he desired their opinion. The council agreed with the commander-in-chief, that such attempt ought to be made, but that the present force was inadequate; and they advised Washington to request of the neighboring colonies, thirteen regiments of militia, to serve till the first of April, namely: seven from Massachusetts, four from Connecticut, and two from New Hampshire. On account of its exposed situation, no call was to be made upon Rhode Island for troops. This was done, and when, on the twenty-ninth, Congress took the matter into consideration, they resolved that the conduct of Washington "was prudent, consistent with his duty, and a further manifestation of his commendable zeal for the good of his country."

On the eighteenth another council was called, in consequence of the arrival of sad intelligence from Canada. A question relative to strengthening the army there, was proposed, when it was agreed that it would be inexpedient, in the present weakened state of the lines, to send a detachment from the main army; but the general was advised to request, that three of the thirteen regiments of militia, which it was resolved to call upon New England for, should be raised with all possible despatch for the Canada expedition, to serve until the first day of January following. John Adams, who was then at Watertown, was present at both councils, by invitation, and approved of the proceedings; and on the nineteenth the commander-in-chief addressed a circular letter to the three colonies before named, setting forth the necessities of the public service, and asking their aid. Immediate action ensued, and on the twenty-third, Washington had the pleasure of writing to General

Lee: "Mr. Trumbull and his council of safety had anticipated my request. The other two colonies have adopted the measure. The three regiments are now raising, and, I would willingly hope, will arrive in time [in Canada] to reinstate matters in that quarter, and give them a more agreeable aspect than they now have."

The month of January wore away, with only a single military exploit, of consequence, to break the tedious monotony of two opposing armies lying in comparative repose. That exploit occurred early in January. The apparent timidity of the Americans in refusing to attack the British, notwithstanding the latter had provoked them by hurling shots upon their works almost daily,* inspired the enemy with confidence in his own strength and the weakness of the "rebels." For a long time the soldiers and the inhabitants in Boston had suffered sickness and privations of every kind. During the severe weather of December, food and fuel had become almost exhausted; and for several weeks previous to the close of the year, the small pox had raged fearfully there—so fearfully that Howe caused his whole army to be inoculated. Shade-trees and uninhabited dwellings were consumed: and had not the mild weather, early in January, allowed vessels to go out of Boston harbor to Halifax and other places for provisions, starvation would have compelled the troops to evacuate the city, or become prisoners to the republicans.

But a change occurred in January, and comparative comfort took the place of severe privation. The officers and soldiers became reconciled to their situation; and, on the thirteenth, General Howe wrote to Lord Dartmouth, and said: "We are not under the least apprehension of an attack upon this place from the rebels, by surprise or otherwise, as taken notice of in your lordship's letter; on the contrary, it were to be wished that they would attempt so rash a step, and quit those strong intrenchments to which they

* Gordon, i., 418, says, that from the burning of Charlestown to Christmas day, the enemy had fired more than two thousand shot and shell, one half of the former being twenty-four pounders They hurled more than three hundred bombs at Ploughed hill, and one hundred at Lechmere's point. By the whole firing on the Cambridge side, they killed only seven men; and on the Roxbury side, just a dozen.

may attribute their present safety." These were confident words, and the actions of the army under Howe attested their sincerity. Amusements of every kind were sought by the officers and soldiers, to while away the tedious winter hours. A theatre was established in Faneuil hall; and some of the officers composed a farce as an after-piece, entitled, "The Blockade of Boston,"* which gave great amusement to those who attended, because the American officers were lampooned, and Washington was made to stalk in with uncouth gait, wearing a big wig and a long, rusty sword, followed by a raw country servant, with a rusty gun eight feet in length! "We had a theatre," wrote an English officer, on the third of March; "we had balls, and there is actually a subscription on foot for a masquerade. England seems to have forgot us, and we endeavor to forget ourselves."

On the evening of the eighth of January another act in "The Blockade of Boston," more real and melodramatic than any in the farce on paper, was performed not far distant. Putnam had finished all of the intended fortifications on Lechmere's point and vicinity, and from his "impregnable fortress" on Cobble hill, he sent a party of about two hundred men, under the gallant Major Knowlton, to surprise and capture a British guard, stationed in some houses at Charlestown that had been spared by the fire on the seventeenth of June. At about eight o'clock in the evening, Knowlton, accompanied by majors Carey and Henly, led his men across a tide-mill-dam, unperceived by the guard on Charlestown Neck, and passing around the base of Bunker's hill, below the British fort, set fire to the buildings occupied by the guard, took several prisoners, and returned to camp without loss, while the cannon of the fort sent many a random shot in the gloom.†

* Because Burgoyne was a clever writer and dramatist, the authorship of this piece was attributed to him. There is no evidence that he wrote it; and the fact that he had returned to England sometime before the theatre was established in Boston, makes it appear highly improbable that he prepared the play. The "London Chronicle," the anti-ministerial paper, attributed the farce to Burgoyne, and said he had "opened a theatrical campaign, of which himself is sole manager, being determined to act with the provincials on the defensive only. 'Tom Thumb' has been alread represented; while, on the other hand, the provincials are preparing to exhibit, early in the spring, 'Measure for Measure.'"

† "Jan. 8. — At night, some of our brave, heroick Americans went Past the Enemy's Brest Work at Bunker hill, and took 5 men and 1 woman Prisoners, and came off as far as Copple hill, when

Intelligence of this attack soon reached Boston, and a sergeant, in hot haste, rushed to the theatre, where General Howe and most of his officers, with a crowd of soldiers and tories, were enjoying the amusement. The play of "The Busy Body" had just ended, and the curtain was rising for the commencement of the farce of "The Blockade of Boston," when the sergeant entered exclaiming: "The alarm-guns are firing at Charlestown, and the Yankees are attacking Bunker's hill!" The audience, supposing this to be a part of the performance, laughed immoderately at the ridiculous idea of the British on Bunker's hill being disturbed by the Yankees. But their mirth was instantly changed to affright, when the burly voice of Howe was heard shouting: "Officers, to your alarm-posts!" A scene of great confusion ensued. Soldiers and citizens rushed from the theatre; women screamed and fainted; and the farce was turned into a tragedy.

Day after day of the month of February passed by, and Washington was still compelled to remain inactive, while almost hourly the murmurs of the public impatience reached him. Full two thousand of his troops were without arms; and so alarming was the real weakness of the continental army, that the commander-in-chief thought it prudent to conceal the fact from his own officers, lest they should despond. He perceived the best interests of his country and his own reputation in jeopardy; yet he was without means to secure the one, or defend the other. His noble spirit was disturbed, but not dismayed; and at the very moment when the weight of responsibility seemed heaviest, it appeared stronger, more constant in purpose, and more reliant upon God.

"I know the unhappy predicament in which I stand," he wrote to Colonel Reed, on the tenth of February; "I know that much is expected of me; I know, that, without men, without arms, without

the flames began to extend, and the enemy that were in the fort, perceiving a number of men gather round the fire, and supposing them to be our men, they kept up a bright fire for the space of near half an hour, upon their own men devillightfoolly."—*MS. Journal of Samuel Haws, a private soldier.*

In general orders the next day, the parole was *Charlestown*, and the countersign was *Knowlton* and Washington highly complimented that officer and his soldiers.

ammunition, without anything fit for the accommodation of a soldier, little is to be done; and, what is mortifying, I know that I can not stand justified to the world without exposing my own weakness, and injuring the cause by declaring my wants, which I am determined not to do, farther than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with them. My situation is so irksome to me at times, that, if I did not consult the public good more than my own tranquillity, I should, long ere this, have put everything on the cast of a die. So far from my having an army of twenty thousand men well armed, &c., I have been here with less than half that number, including sick, furloughed, and on command, and those neither armed nor clothed as they should be. In short, my situation has been such, that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers."

"With respect to myself," Washington said in the same letter, "I have never entertained an idea of an accommodation since I heard of the measures which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker's hill fight. The king's speech has confirmed the sentiments I entertained upon the news of that affair—and if every man was of my mind, the ministers of Great Britain should know, in a few words, upon what issue the cause should be put. I would not be deceived by artful declarations or specious pretences; nor would I be amused by unmeaning propositions; but in open, undisguised, and manly terms, proclaim our wrongs, and our resolutions to be redressed. I would tell them that we had borne much—that we had long and ardently sought reconciliation upon honorable terms—that it had been denied us—that all our attempts after peace had proved abortive, and had been grossly misrepresented—that we had done everything that could be expected from the best of subjects—that the spirit of freedom beat too high in us to submit to slavery—and that if nothing else would satisfy a tyrant and his diabolical ministry, we were determined to shake off all connection with a state so unjust and unnatural. This I would tell them, not under cover, but in words as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness."

These resolute words manifest the strength of Washington's

patriotism and faith; and they also reveal the existence of a growing desire for independence, at that time, in minds wherein thoughts of reconciliation with Great Britain had hitherto predominated. That desire was now beginning to pervade the minds of all classes, especially of the thinking men in civil and military life, to whose vision the consequences were more clearly presented. It had taken deep root in the army. Greene, and Lee, and other officers, had already expressed it boldly; and at about this time, Colonel Moylan wrote: "Shall we never leave off debating and *boldly declare for independence?* That, and that only, will make us act with spirit and vigor. The bulk of the people will not be against it, but the few and timid always will; but what can be expected from a contrary conduct? Can it be supposed possible that a reconciliation will take place after the loss of blood, cities, and treasure, already suffered; but the war must come to every man's home before he will think of his neighbor's losses." The desire for independence very soon became an active and fruitful sentiment throughout the colonies, as we shall more particularly observe presently.

At this juncture, when affairs appeared gloomiest, light began to dawn, and the condition of the army gradually assumed a more favorable aspect. The supplies brought from Lake Champlain, by Knox, were invaluable, but not sufficient, for powder was yet wanting. It soon came, partly from the king's stores at New York, that had been seized by the Sons of Liberty, and partly from other colonies, where it had been manufactured. An occasional prize on the ocean added to the stock; and before the close of February, powder was almost abundant in the American camp. The ten regiments of militia came in; and the increasing cold after the ninth of February, formed a strong bridge of ice over the waters around Boston.

When the latter event, for which the Americans had been waiting, actually occurred, Washington resolved to attack the enemy, if possible, even before the powder came and the new regiments were all in. Accordingly he called a council of general officers on the sixteenth. Intelligence from Boston showed to the commander

in-chief, that the British army did not much exceed five thousand men fit for duty, while that of the Americans, when augmented by the arriving militia, would number a little more than seventeen thousand. Making these figures a basis, Washington predicated a question thereon, and submitted it to the council, in the following form: "A stroke well aimed at this critical juncture may put a final period to the war, and restore peace and tranquillity so much to be wished for, and therefore, whether, part of Cambridge and Roxbury bays being frozen over, a general assault should not be made on Boston."

Washington was decidedly in favor of the attempt. General Ward was more favorable to taking possession of Dorchester heights first; and Gates was decidedly opposed to an attack at present. In fact, Ward, Thomas, Spencer, and others, had been collecting fascines, gabions, and other materials for use on Dorchester heights, unknown to Washington, not doubting the importance of occupying that eminence. When a vote was taken on the question proposed, it was decided in the negative, it being deemed improper to make an assault while the army was so deficient in men, arms, and ammunition. The council also made a higher estimate of the British and tory forces in Boston, who were furnished with artillery, were double officered, and were well protected by a fleet, whose enfilading fire would make sad havoc among the Americans on the ice. They resolved, however, that a cannonade and bombardment of Boston would be advantageous, as soon as a sufficient supply of powder should be obtained, and not before; and that, meanwhile, preparations should be made to take possession of Dorchester hill, and of Noddle island (if the situation of the water would allow), with a view of driving the enemy out of the city.

This decision of the council was unsatisfactory to Washington, and did not change his opinion in the least. His works were completed, the ice was strong, his troops were increasing, and the country was impatient of delay. To the president of Congress he wrote, two days afterward, and said: "I can not help acknowl-

edging that I have many disagreeable sensations on account of my situation; for, to have the eyes of the whole continent fixed with anxious expectation of hearing of some great event, and to be restrained in every military operation for want of the necessary means of carrying it on, is not very pleasing, especially as the means used to conceal my weakness from the enemy, conceal it also from our friends, and add to their wonder." To Colonel Reed he said: "Knowing the ice would not last, I thought this a favorable opportunity to make an assault upon the troops in town. I proposed it in council; but behold, though we had been waiting all the year for this favorable event, the enterprise was thought too dangerous. Perhaps it was; perhaps the irksomeness of my situation led me to undertake more than could be warranted by prudence. I did not think so, and I am sure yet, that the enterprise, if it had been undertaken with resolution, must have succeeded; without it, any would fail."

Failing to secure the acquiescence of his general officers in his plans for a direct assault upon the British army, the commander-in-chief directed his energies to the consummation of other measures proposed by the council. The proposition to take possession of, and fortify Dorchester heights, impressed him very favorably, and he immediately commenced arrangements for that purpose. But before considering these, let us dwell for a moment upon an episode in the life of Washington, which exhibits his courtesy, kindness of heart, and susceptibility to the influences of true genius, and of friendly ministrations of every kind, in a remarkable degree.

This was the occasion. Mrs. Wheatley, the wife of a citizen of Boston, went to the slave-market in that town, one morning in the year 1761, to purchase a child-negress, that she might rear her to be a faithful nurse in the old age of her mistress. She saw many plump children, but one of delicate frame, modest demeanor, and clothed in nothing but a piece of dirty carpet wrapped about her, attracted her attention, and Mrs. Wheatley took her home in her chaise, and gave her the name of Phillis. The child appeared to be about seven years of age, and exhibited remarkable intelligence,

and apt imitative powers. Mrs. Wheatley's daughter taught the child to read, and her progress in knowledge was truly wonderful. The development of her moral nature kept pace with that of the intellectual, and she was greatly beloved by all. Her mental qualities soon attracted the attention of men of learning, and they supplied her with books to read. She learned to write, and as she grew to womanhood, her thoughts found expression in written verse. Her mistress treated her as if she was her own child, and she was frequently a guest in the families of the rich and learned in Boston. In the summer of 1773, failing health caused her to take a sea voyage. She went to England, accompanied by Mrs. Wheatley's son, and was cordially received by Lady Huntingdon, Lord Dartmouth, the lord-mayor of London, and others; and some of her poems were published there, in a collection dedicated to the countess of Huntingdon. These gave evidences of quite extensive reading, and remarkable tenacity of memory, many of them abounding with warm expressions in behalf of freedom, her favorite theme. Their genuineness was attested by the governor and lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts, John Hancock and other public men, and many of the clergy of Boston. Her mistress died soon after her return, the Wheatley family were broken up, and Phillis resided with different friends until her marriage with an intelligent but worthless colored man of Boston, named Peters. From the time of her mistress's death her muse appears to have been silent, until awakened by the inspiration of Washington's character and position, at the head of the continental army, in 1775 At Providence, Rhode Island, she wrote the following letter, dated October 26, 1775, and in it she sent a poetical epistle to the commander-in-chief:—

"SIR: I have taken the freedom to address your excellency in the enclosed poem, and entreat your acceptance, though I am not insensible of its inaccuracies. Your being appointed by the grand continental Congress to be Generalisimo of the armies of North America, together with the fame of your virtues, excite sensations not easy to suppress. Your generosity, therefore, I presume, will

pardon the attempt. Wishing your excellency all possible success in the great cause you are so generously engaged in, I am

"Your excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

"PHILLIS WHEATLEY."

This letter remained unanswered until the twenty-eighth of February following, when Washington was in the midst of the most active preparations for attacking the enemy. He then wrote as follows:—

"MISS PHILLIS: Your favor of the twenty-sixth of October did not reach my hands till the middle of December. Time enough, you will say, to have given an answer ere this. Granted. But a variety of important occurrences continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for the delay, and plead my excuse for the seeming, but not real, neglect. I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me, in the elegant lines you enclosed; and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyric, the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your poetical talents; in honor of which, and as a tribute justly due to you, I would have published the poem, had I not been apprehensive, that, while I only meant to give the world this new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of vanity. This, and nothing else, determined me not to give it a place in the public prints.

"If you should ever come to Cambridge, or near headquarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favored by the Muses, and to whom nature has been so beneficent in her dispensations. I am, with great respect, your obedient, humble servant.

"GEO. WASHINGTON."

In a letter to Colonel Reed on the tenth of the same month, after discoursing of the most grave and important public matters to his friend, Washington observed: "I recollect nothing else worth giving you the trouble of, unless you can be amused by reading a letter and poem addressed to me by Miss PHILLIS WHEATLEY. In searching over a parcel of papers the other day, in order to destroy

such as were useless, I brought it to light again. At first, with a view of doing justice to her poetical genius, I had a great mind to publish the poem; but not knowing whether it might not be considered rather as a mark of my own vanity, than as a compliment to her, I laid it aside, till I came across it again in the manner just mentioned." As the letter and poem were published in the "Pennsylvania Magazine, or American Monthly Museum," for April, 1776, it is probable that they were communicated to that work by Colonel Reed.*

* The following is a copy of the poem alluded to:—

HIS EXCELLENCY, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

CELESTIAL choir! enthroned in realms of light,
Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write,
While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms,
She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.
See Mother Earth, her offspring's fate bemoan,
And nations gaze at scenes before unknown!
See the bright beams of Heaven's revolving light,
Involved in sorrows and the vail of night!
The goddess comes, she moves divinely fair,
Olive and laurel binds her golden hair:
Whereon shines this native of the skies,
Unnumbered charms and recent graces rise.
Muse! bow propitious while my pen relates
How pour her armies through a thousand gates,
As when Eolus heaven's fair face deforms,
Enwrapped in tempest and a night of storms;
Astonished ocean feels the wild uproar,
The refluent surges beat the sounding shore;
Or thick as leaves in Autumn's golden reign
Such, and so many, moves the warrior's train.
In bright array they seek the work of war,
Where high unfurled the ensign waves in air.
Shall I to WASHINGTON their praise recite?
Enough thou know'st them in the fields of fight.
Thou, first in place and honor, we demand
The grace and glory of thy martial band.
Famed for thy valor, for thy virtues more,
Hear every tongue thy guardian aid implore;
One century scarce performed its destined round,
When Gallic powers Columbia's fury found;
And so may you, whoever dares disgrace
The land of freedom's heaven-defended race!
Fixed are the eyes of nations on the scales,
For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.
Anon, Britannia droops the pensive head,
While round increase the rising hills of dead.
Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power, too late.

This correspondence exhibits a beautiful phase in the character of Washington, and shows the perfect harmony of all its qualities. To see the leader of an army, surrounded by the most trying circumstances, at a time when every thought would naturally be employed in the momentous duties of his vocation, thus yielding homage to genius in the most humble shrine, is indeed a spectacle of great interest for contemplation.

> Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,
> Thy every action let the goddess guide.
> A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine
> With gold unfading, Washington! be thine.

Phillis made considerable progress in the study of Latin, and was fond of reading translations of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid. Many of her poems abound with classical allusions. She wrote several poems, after the one addressed to Washington. One of these was an elegy on the death of the Reverend Samuel Cooper, D. D., of Boston, written in January, 1784. She died in Boston, in extreme poverty, on the fifth of December following, at the age of about thirty-one years.

While Phillis was in London, Brooke Watson, the lord-mayor, presented to her a copy of Foulis's folio Glasgow edition of "Paradise Lost." This was sold, after her death, and the proceeds used in payment of her husband's debts. It is preserved in the library of Harvard college, at Cambridge. Her poetical epistle to Washington was for a long time hidden from the public eye. "I have not been able to find," says Sparks "among Washington's papers, the letter and poem addressed to him." These the Messrs Duyckinck found, and republished in their "Cyclopedia of American Literature."

CHAPTER V.

PREPARATIONS FOR CONFLICT — RESOLVES OF THE COUNCIL-OF-WAR — MOVEMENTS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY — WASHINGTON'S IMPRESSIVE ORDERS — TIME FIXED FOR TAKING POSSESSION OF DORCHESTER HEIGHTS — EXTENSIVE PREPARATIONS — BOSTON CANNONADED BY THE AMERICANS — MRS. ADAMS'S DESCRIPTION — DORCHESTER HEIGHTS FORTIFIED — ASTONISHMENT OF THE BRITISH — EXPECTED BATTLE PREVENTED BY A TEMPEST — WASHINGTON'S DISAPPOINTMENT — BOSTON TO BE EVACUATED — TERROR OF THE LOYALISTS — HOWE'S HUMILIATION — WASHINGTON'S VIGILANCE — CLOSING SCENES OF BRITISH RULE IN BOSTON — PICTURE OF THE LOYALIST REFUGEES — DEPARTURE OF THE BRITISH — BOSTON REDEEMED.

THE plan and preparations for taking post on Dorchester heights, contemplated by some of the general officers before the meeting of the council-of-war, on the sixteenth of February, appears to have been revealed to the enemy, and on the night of the thirteenth, a party of about five hundred regulars, sent out by General Howe, landed on Dorchester neck, and burned some houses there. "It being understood," wrote Howe, "that the enemy intended to take possession of Dorchester Point, or Neck, a detachment was ordered from Castle William, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie, and another of grenadiers and light-infantry, commanded by Major Musgrave, with directions to pass over the ice and destroy every house and every kind of cover on that peninsula, which was executed, and six of the enemy's guard taken prisoners."* As soon as the flames were discovered, a party of Americans marched to attack the invaders, but they had retreated.

Toward the close of February, the American army was strong enough in numbers and munitions of war, in the opinion of even the extremely cautious council of officers, to attempt the measure

* General Howe to Lord Dartmouth.

of taking possession of Dorchester heights. The ten regiments to be furnished by New England were in the camp, and there was no lack of powder. Accordingly, on the twenty-sixth of February, Washington made general preparations for the important movement, hoping and believing, that it would either call the enemy out to battle, or drive them from Boston. On that day he addressed a letter to the Massachusetts council, requesting them to order the militia of certain towns nearest Dorchester and Roxbury, to be ready "to repair to the lines at those places, with their arms, ammunition, and accoutrements, instantly upon a signal given." This request was promptly complied with. During its winter session, the provincial Congress of Massachusetts had thoroughly organized the militia of the province, and formed thirteen regiments. John Hancock,* James Warren, and Azar Orne, were appointed major-generals. A new emission of paper-money, to a large amount, was authorized, and various measures were adopted to strengthen the continental army.

On the same day Washington said to his troops, in general orders: "All officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, are positively forbid playing at cards, or other games of chance. At this time of public distress, men may find enough to do in the service of their God and country, without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality. As the season is now fast approaching, when every man must expect to be drawn into the field of action, it is highly important that he should prepare his mind, as well as everything necessary for it. It is a noble cause we are engaged in; it is the cause of virtue and mankind; every temporal advantage and comfort, to us and our posterity, depends upon the vigor of our exertions; in short, freedom or slavery must be the result of our conduct; there can, therefore, be no greater inducement to men to behave well. But it may not be amiss for the troops to know, that

* From the beginning, Mr. Hancock had desired a military position of distinction. We have seen, according to the testimony of John Adams, that he coveted the appointment of commander-in-chief of the American armies, when that distinction was conferred upon Washington; and, as early as the tenth of July, 1775, he had written to Washington, saying: "I must beg the favor, that you will reserve some berth for me, in such department as you may judge most proper; for I am determined to act under you, if it be to take the firelock and join the ranks as a volunteer.'

if any man in action shall presume to skulk, hide himself, or retreat from the enemy without the orders of his commanding officer, he will be instantly shot down as an example of cowardice; cowards having too frequently disconcerted the best-formed troops, by their dastardly behavior."

Having issued these timely orders, Washington called a council of general officers, and Colonel Mifflin, then quartermaster-general, was invited, for the first time, to participate in the deliberations. The chief business of the council was to fix the time for taking possession of Dorchester heights. Mifflin proposed the night of the fourth of March, that being the eve of the anniversary of the "Boston Massacre," on which day, for four successive years, the hearts of the people had been strongly stirred by the eloquence of patriotic orators. "Should the enemy come out to attack us, the next day," he remarked, "our war-cry might be, *Remember the fifth of March!* and it would have a powerful effect upon the troops." His proposition was approved by a majority; and it was further determined to blind the British to the real intentions of the Americans, by opening a cannonade and bombardment upon Boston, on the night of the second of March, and continue it at intervals, until the Americans should become occupants of Dorchester heights. Meanwhile, two divisions of troops, under brigadiers Sullivan and Greene, and commanded by the veteran Putnam, were to be in readiness to march over the ice from Cambridge and attack Boston, should the enemy attempt to drive the Americans from Dorchester hill.

Preparations for these movements were made with great despatch, but with profound secrecy. Fascines, gabions, pressed hay, and especially chandeliers, or moving parapets, were collected in large quantities at Dorchester and Roxbury, for intrenching purposes; and two thousand bandages for broken limbs were prepared. In the open waters at the mouth of the Charles river, the Americans had forty-five batteaux in readiness, each capable of carrying eighty men; and also two strong floating batteries, well armed and manned. The British, meanwhile, unconscious of much that was going on in the American camps, were resting in fancied security

indulging in feelings of contempt for the undisciplined "Yankee rabble," and dreaming, perhaps, of easy triumphs in the spring. They were well furnished with provisions, clothing, and arms; and in the harbor were five proud vessels-of-war, carrying, collectively, more than one hundred and fifty heavy guns; also numerous transports. In the pride of their strength they feared no serious disturbance of their repose.

But a change was suddenly wrought, and the repose of the British army was at an end. On the evening of Saturday, the second day of March, a severe cannonade and bombardment was commenced upon Boston, from Cobble hill, Lechmere's Point, Lamb's Dam, and Roxbury. It was kept up nearly all night; and before morning the fine mortar from among the prizes of Manley, called "Congress," and four others, were bursted in consequence of incompetent bedding. Much damage was done in the town. Many houses were shattered; six men were wounded by a shot that entered a guardhouse, but no lives were lost. The enemy, however, were awakened to a consciousness of danger. "We were roused to a sense of our situation last night," wrote an English officer on Sunday morning, "in a manner unpleasant enough. The rebels have been, for some time past, erecting a bomb-battery, and last night began to play upon us.... The rebel army is not brave, I believe," he said; but he was forced to the confession—"It is agreed on all hands, that their artillery officers are at least equal to ours." The British returned the fire with great spirit; and they hurled one thirteen-inch shell as far as Prospect hill. Their firing, however, effected no essential injury.

This cannonade was equally unexpected to the people of the surrounding country, and many were aroused from their beds to participate in the joys and fears and deep anxieties, which this prelude to general hostilities awakened. The sound was heard more than a hundred miles in the interior; and every ear was turned toward Boston, eager to catch the most minute accents of this ominous voice of war, as it came booming over the land.

The wife of John Adams, who lived at the foot of Penn's hill,

wrote to her husband,* on that momentous Saturday night, and said: "I have been in a constant state of anxiety since you left me. It has been said, 'to-morrow,' and 'to-morrow,' for this month, and when the dreadful 'to-morrow' will be, I know not. But hark! The house this instant shakes with the roar of cannon. I have been to the door, and find it is a cannonade from our army. Orders, I find, are come, for all the remaining militia to repair to the lines on Monday night, by twelve o'clock. No sleep for me to-night."

The stirring epistolary record of events during the next forty-eight hours, made by this patriotic woman, are quite sufficient for an appreciation of the scene. "I went to bed after twelve, but got no rest," she wrote on Sunday evening. "The cannon continued firing, and my heart kept pace with them all night. We have had a pretty quiet day, but what to-morrow will bring forth, God only knows."

On Monday evening Mrs. Adams wrote: "I have just returned from Penn's hill, where I have been sitting to hear the amazing roar of cannon, and from whence I could see every shell that was thrown. The sound, I think, is one of the grandest in nature, and is of the true species of the sublime. 'Tis now an incessant roar; but oh, the fatal ideas which are connected with the sound! How many of our dear countrymen must fall!" The next morning she wrote: "I went to bed about twelve, and rose again a little after one. I could no more sleep than if I had been in the engagement; the rattling of the windows, the jar of the house, the continual roar of twenty-four pounders, and the bursting of shells, give us such ideas, and realize a scene to us of which we could scarcely form any conception. I hope to give you joy of Boston, even if it is in ruins, before I send this away."

The scene was indeed a fearful one. At seven o'clock in the

* Toward the close of the year 1775, Mr. Adams returned to his home, partly on private business, and partly to consult with leading men in Massachusetts on public affairs. He took his seat in the provincial assembly of Massachusetts. Meanwhile that body re-elected him a delegate to the continental Congress, and at the close of January, he left for Philadelphia, in company with a newly-elected colleague, Elbridge Gerry

evening, General Thomas, with two thousand men (eight hundred of them leading the way, and bearing intrenching tools), moved in the direction of Dorchester heights. At the same moment every American battery opened upon the town with the greatest activity.* A train of three hundred carts, laden with pressed hay, fascines, and chandeliers, followed the troops, the low rumble of the wheels on the frozen ground in passing over the Neck, that might betray them, being broken by bundles of hay placed between the vehicles and the enemy.

The atmosphere was serene, and the moon was shining brightly, and yet the British did not discover this movement of the Americans. The detachment went silently on, while the belligerents were thundering at each other, unmindful of aught except their own commotion; and within an hour, Thomas's troops, separated into two divisions, were upon the heights busily engaged in preparing breastworks, while the carts, some of them making three and four trips across the Neck, brought forward abundant materials. Chandeliers and fascines were particularly needed, for the ground was frozen to the depth of eighteen inches, and casting up earthworks was an impossibility.

Under the direction of the veteran Gridley, who yet remained in the service, the lines of fortification were marked out upon the two eminences composing Dorchester heights; and, as upon Breed's hill, on a sultry night almost nine months before, the troops worked wisely and well. Within the framework of the chandeliers the pressed hay and fascines were placed, and formed breastworks of great strength and tenacity. In this manner two forts were raised before the dawn, sufficiently high to afford ample protection for forces within; and upon these, heavy cannon were also placed in positions to command the town, the castle, and the British shipping in the harbor. "Perhaps," says Heath in his memoirs, "there never was so much work done in so short a time."

A frosty mist lay upon the waters around Boston on the morning

* According to the report of Colonel Knox, the Americans hurled one hundred and forty-four round shot and thirteen shells into Boston, on the night of the fourth of March

of the momentous fifth of March, and it was almost sunrise before the royalists in the city could clearly discover and comprehend the formidable apparitions that loomed up more grandly than the reality from the dense medium, upon Dorchester hills. In these the British commander and his associates read their doom. As Howe gazed in astonishment and alarm upon these works, he was perplexed. "I know not what I shall do," he said; "the rebels have done more in one night than my whole army would have done in a month:" and to Lord Dartmouth he wrote; "It must have been the employment of at least twelve thousand men." "The forts were raised," wrote an English officer, "with an expedition equal to that of the genii belonging to Aladdin's wonderful lamp." Admiral Shuldham, equally alarmed, declared, that if the Americans should retain those heights, he could not keep one of his majesty's ships in the harbor. Immediate action was, therefore, necessary, and Howe called a council-of-war, when it was determined to take measures for driving the republicans from their new and strong position.

Two thousand four hundred British regulars embarked in transports early in the forenoon, rendezvoused at Castle William, and under the command of Earl Percy, prepared to make an attack, that night, upon the rebel works. Washington was early apprized of this movement, and supposing the attack was to be made immediately, he sent a reinforcement of two thousand men to General Thomas. The commander-in-chief soon followed, for he was anxious to direct his troops in the impending conflict. Before ten o'clock he was upon Dorchester heights, filled with joy at the prospect of a speedy termination of that comparative inactivity which had become so irksome to him. He encouraged the soldiers by reminding them that it was the fifth of March, a day long to be remembered, as the one on which the blood of freemen was shed in the streets of Boston by hireling ministerial troops.* He also assured them of

* Since the "Massacre," on the fifth of March, 1770, the day had been observed in Boston with solemn ceremonies, the most prominent of which was an oration by some gentleman chosen by the people. The first (in 1771) was delivered by James Lovell, afterward a member of the continental Congress. The second by Joseph Warren, who died on Breed's hill. The third by Doctor Benjamin Church, the first American traitor. The fourth by John Hancock, afterward president of the continental Congress. The fifth by Joseph Warren, again, surrounded by menacing British sol

the alarm and confusion of the enemy, and the certainty of victory for the republicans if a conflict should now occur. His words thrilled every bosom as with electric power, and the hands of labor were plied busily all day long, in strengthening the fortifications, and planting cannon and mortars thereon. And as the hills were steep, new implements of destruction, suggested by Mifflin, were prepared in the form of rows of barrels filled with loose earth and stones, placed so as to be rolled down upon the enemy when ascending the hills, to break his ranks and produce confusion.

Meanwhile, signals had been established upon the various eminences, so that almost instantaneous communications might be made from Dorchester to Roxbury and Cambridge; and four thousand picked troops, under Brigadiers Sullivan and Greene, were paraded near headquarters, in readiness to be led by Putnam to an attack upon Boston, when a concerted signal should be given at Roxbury. The mouth of the Charles river was then clear of ice, and they were to embark at Cambridge creek in the batteaux already mentioned, covered by three floating batteries. The first division, under Sullivan, was to land at the powder-house, and take possession of Beacon hill and Mount Horam; the second, under Greene, was to land at Barton's point, or a little south of it, and after securing that post, to join the other division, force the enemy's gates at the Neck, and let in the republican troops at Roxbury. Officers and men throughout the American lines were in high spirits, in expectation of an immediate engagement and certain victory for the republicans.

It was a mild, sunny day, when these preparations for conflict were made. The neighboring hills were covered with people expecting a repetition of the Bunker's hill tragedy. But they gazed in vain, long and impatiently, toward Castle William and Dorchester heights. The afternoon wore away, and toward evening dark clouds came up from the ocean upon the wings of a furious wind. Before

diers. The sixth was on the day in question; and as Boston was filled with British troops, it was delivered at Watertown, by Peter Thacher. These celebrations were kept up until the close of the war. The last oration on the fifth of March, was delivered at Boston, by Doctor Thomas Welch in 1783.

sunset the waters of the harbor were lashed into a foam by the rising tempest, and the surf that beat upon the shores was too perilous in its power for boats to venture into it. Thick darkness fell early upon the land and sea, the rain came down in dashing showers, and one of the most terrible tempests remembered by the inhabitants, raged there until late the next day. Howe abandoned his plans, and Washington, greatly disappointed, returned to his camp with the reinforcement, leaving a strong body to guard the works on Dorchester heights. "I will not lament or repine at any act of Providence," he wrote to Reed, on the seventh, "because I am, in a great measure, a convert to Mr. Pope's opinion, that 'Whatever is, is right;' but I think everything had the appearance of a successful issue, if we had come to an engagement on that day."

The situation of Howe was now critical and mortifying. The fleet and army were in great peril, and the loyal inhabitants, filled with terror, demanded that sure protection which Howe had so often confidently promised. In his successive letters to the ministry, he had affected to despise the "rebels"—affected not to feel the least degree of apprehension that they would attack him, and professed a desire that they should; and boasted of the feebleness and timidity of the American troops, and the valor of his own. It was, therefore, mortifying for him now to expose his own untruthfulness or delusion, and the folly of his boastful words. But he was compelled to drink the bitter draught. The alternative was destruction or flight; and at a council-of-war held on the seventh, it was resolved to save the army by evacuating the town.

This resolution spread great consternation among the tories in the city, for they dreaded the just indignation of the patriots whom they had injured, when they should return. They saw the power on which they had leaned as almost invincible, growing weak, and quailing before those battalions of undisciplined militia, whom it had affected to despise. They well knew that righteous retribution awaited them when British bayonets should leave the peninsula, and the excited patriots should return to their desolated

homes. The dangers of a perilous voyage to a strange land seemed far less fearful than the indignation of the oppressed Americans; and the loyalists resolved to brave the former rather than the latter. They commenced, therefore, to prepare for a speedy departure and as much of their merchandise, household furniture, and other private property of every kind, as they could take with them, were crowded on board the ships. "By all accounts," Washington said in a letter to his kinsman, John A. Washington, "there never existed a more miserable set of beings than those wretched creatures now are. Taught to believe that the power of Great Britain was superior to all opposition, and that foreign aid, if not, was at hand, they were even higher and more insulting in their opposition than the regulars. When the order issued, therefore, for embarking the troops in Boston, no electric shock — no sudden clap of thunder — in a word, the last trump could not have struck them with greater consternation. They were at their wit's end, and conscious of their black ingratitude, chose to commit themselves to the mercy of the waves at a tempestuous season, rather than meet their offended countrymen."

Many weeks before, as we have observed, Dartmouth advised Howe to evacuate Boston and repair to New York. Howe then pleaded the lack of vessels as an excuse for not leaving. Now, with many less, while his troops were more numerous, and more than one thousand refugee loyalists and their effects were added to the bulk, he prepared to depart. Then he could remain; now he could not: and so, on board about one hundred and fifty ships and transports, he hurried provisions, ammunition, and warlike stores of every kind, but was compelled to leave a large quantity of heavy artillery, which he dismounted and spiked, or cast into the sea.* He also demolished some of the works in the city.

The few patriots who remained in Boston, felt much anxiety for

* The principal articles left at Castle William and Boston, because there were not vessels enough to carry them away, were two hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, great and small; four thirteen-and-a-half-inch mortars; twenty-five hundred chaldrons of sea-coal; twenty-five hundred bushels of wheat; twenty-three hundred bushels of barley; six hundred bushels of oats; one hundred jars of oil, containing a barrel each, and one hundred and fifty horses.

the fate of the town. They saw the preparations for departure, and were persuaded that the enemy, smarting under the goadings of disappointed pride and ambition, would perform some signal act of vengeance before leaving—perhaps set fire to the city. These surmises were strengthened by a threat made by Howe, that he would burn the town if his army should be molested while embarking, and the fearful array of vessels which the admiral had arranged around the city, to protect the troops. The most influential of these whigs, accordingly communicated with Howe on the subject, through General Robertson, and he promised, that if Washington would allow him to evacuate quietly, the town should be spared, and all property be respected. A communication of these facts, signed by four whig citizens, was sent to the American lines at Roxbury, but without particular address. It was received by Colonel Learned, who carried it to Washington. The commander-in-chief, after advising with several of the general officers, remarked that the paper had no official sanction, and its provisions would not be obligatory upon General Howe, and that he should therefore refuse to notice it. This reply, which was considered non-committal, was communicated to the persons through whom the address from Boston was received, and both parties appeared to tacitly agree to the arrangement.

In this, as in all other cases during his military career, Washington did not relax his vigilance, because success appeared within his grasp. On the ninth he constructed a battery near the water on Dorchester Neck; and that night a detachment marched to Nooks's hill, a point nearer the city and completely commanding it, and planted a battery there. A fire imprudently kindled, revealed their operations to the enemy in the city, and a severe cannonade was immediately opened upon the patriots from the British bat teries. The American cannon instantly responded; and all night long there was a continual roar of artillery. More than eight hundred shots were fired during the night. It was a fearful hour for the people of Boston, and all their pleasant dreams of escape from danger, were changed to anticipations of the horrors of an

active siege and probable pillage. But these gloomy forebodings were soon dispelled. Howe, too cautious to risk a general engagement, withheld his cannonade in the morning; and Washington, although resolved upon possessing Boston at all events, preferred to obtain it peaceably.

And now preparations for the evacuation went on vigorously, but in the midst of great confusion and many outrages. The loyalists who could not carry everything with them, destroyed such furniture as they were compelled to leave behind. This appeared to excite the avarice and destructiveness of the common soldiers, who broke open and plundered many stores. This wickedness seemed, in turn, to infect the British commander-in-chief, for, on the tenth of March, he ordered Crean Brush, a conceited, sycophantic tory from New York,* who had fawned at the feet of Howe ever since the siege began, to seize all clothing and dry goods not in possession of loyalists, and place them on board two brigantines in the harbor. This authorized plunder caused great distress, for many of the whig inhabitants were completely stripped. Shops and dwellings were broken open and plundered by soldiers and sailors, and what goods could not be carried away, were wantonly destroyed. These excesses were forbidden, in general orders on the twelfth, for the plunderers were not nice in discriminating between friends and foes; but the prohibition was very little heeded.

The streets in differents parts of the town were barricaded on the fourteenth, and dispositions of the troops were made for a departure. General Howe issued a proclamation on the fifteenth, ordering the inhabitants to remain in their houses, as the troops were about to embark. Again an easterly wind frustrated the designs of the British general, and the troops were delayed until Sunday, the seventeenth. Meanwhile the soldiers acted more like demons than like men. They went about plundering public and private property, defacing and destroying valuable furniture, and

* He represented Cumberland county (now the southern part of Vermont next to New York), in the colonial assembly of New York, and always voted against whig measures in that body. In 1775, he made a speech against the proposition to appoint delegates to the continental Congress, and was answered by Schuyler and Clinton

throwing costly goods into the water. For several days Boston practically endured the miseries of sack and pillage.

Howe lingered so long that Washington suspected his preparations for departure to be only a feint to gain time for expected reinforcements to arrive. He, therefore, determined to bring matters to a crisis at once, and accordingly, on Saturday night, the sixteenth, he detached a force to Nooks's hill, to construct breastworks and plant cannon there. This movement, together with a false report of a deserter to the British, that a general assault was about to take place, had the desired effect. On Sunday morning the town was in a tumult, and the embarkation commenced, while the Americans, from their commanding positions, looked on in silence and with satisfaction, without firing a gun. Almost twelve thousand soldiers, sailors, and refugees, were in motion before sunrise on that sabbath morning, and presented a scene not easily described.* A British officer who saw it, thus wrote :—

"The people of the town who were friends to government, took care of nothing but their merchandise; and found means to employ the men belonging to the transports in embarking their goods, so that several of the vessels were entirely filled with private property, instead of the king's stores. By some unavoidable accident, the medicines, surgeons' chest, instruments, and necessaries, were left in the hospital. The confusion unavoidable to such a disaster, will make you conceive how much must be forgot, where every man had a private concern. The necessary care and distress of the women, children, sick, and wounded, required every assistance that could be given. It was not like breaking up a camp, where every man knows his duty; it was like departing your country with your wives, your servants, your household furniture, and all your encum-

* "During this exciting period, the journals continued to chronicle the success of the Americans on the sea. On the sixth, it was announced that the *Yankee Hero* had sent into Newburyport a fine brig of two hundred tons burden; and, on the fourteenth, that Captain Manly had sent into Portsmouth, an armed ship of two hundred and forty tons, loaded with provisions for Boston; and had also sent into Cape Anne, a ship of three hundred tons, filled with stores for the army. A transport brig of fourteen guns, laden with naval stores and provisions, ran ashore at the back of the cape. The people boarded her, and unloaded her cargo. She had on board five barrels of powder, and five hundred pounds of specie."—*Frothingham's Siege of Boston*, page 308.

brances.* The officers, who felt the disgrace of their retreat, did their utmost to keep up appearances. The men, who thought they were changing for the better, strove to take advantage of the present times, and were kept from plunder and drink with difficulty.†

At nine o'clock the garrison on Bunker's hill left that post, and marched down to the shore; and at ten, these and all the troops and loyalists in Boston were on board the vessels. It was a sorrowful flight to most of the tories, for men of property left all behind to be lost by confiscation; and almost every one was compelled to rely, for daily food, upon rations from the army stores. Many of them deserve the tear of genuine pity, for they had acted according to the convictions of conscience and duty. The memory of these claims our highest respect; and when we consider the American loyalists as a body, we must remember that many of them were real martyrs in a cause which they believed to be just and righteous. Their faith was sealed by their blood and treasure, and they were no less patriots because their patriotism was founded in mistaken ideas concerning measures most conducive to their country's welfare.

Boston was now evacuated; and while Putnam and six regiments were embarking in boats at Cambridge, to take possession of the town and British works, the fleet that was to convey the fugitives away, anchored in Nantasket roads. Putnam landed on Sewall's Point, and was astonished at the sight of sentinels yet at their posts on Bunker's hill. Upon closer inspection, it was found that

* In Howe's report, the loyalists who fled with him from Boston, were classed as follows: one hundred and thirty-two who had held official stations; eighteen clergymen; one hundred and five persons from the country; two hundred and thirteen merchants; three hundred and eighty-two farmers, traders, and mechanics; and nearly two hundred more whose names and occupations were ot registered.

† The troops were glad to get away from Boston. A fair exhibition of the feelings of the army, is given in a letter written by a British officer on the voyage from the delivered city. "Expect no more letters from Boston," he said; "we have quitted that place. Washington played upon the town for several days. A shell which burst while we were preparing to embark, did great damage. Our men have suffered. We have one consolation left. You know the proverbial expression, 'Neither Hell, Hull, nor Halifax, can afford worse shelter than Boston.' To fresh provision I have been, for many months, quite an utter stranger. An egg was a rarity. The next letter from Halifax."

these were only effigies. A detachment then advanced, and with a shout that startled the retreating Britons, they took possession of the abandoned fortress, wherein no living thing was found. Then a thousand men, under Putnam, who had previously had the small pox, crossed the narrow frith, entered Boston, and took possession of the fortresses on the heights, lately occupied by troops among whom that loathsome disease had long prevailed. The gates on Boston Neck were unbarred, and General Ward, with five thousand troops at Roxbury, entered in triumph, Ensign Richards bearing the Union flag. General Putnam then assumed the command of the whole, and in the name of the THIRTEEN UNITED COLONIES, he took possession of all the forts and other defences, and military munitions and stores, which the retreating Britons had left behind. On the twentieth, the main body of the army, under Washington, entered the city in triumph, amid the joyous greetings of hundreds, who, for more than ten months, had suffered almost every conceivable privation and insult. It was a jubilee for all.

CHAPTER VI.

SAD APPEARANCE OF BOSTON — DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY — ORDER RESTORED — EFFECTS OF THE VICTORY IN AMERICA — HONORS TO WASHINGTON — THANKS AND A GOLD MEDAL AWARDED BY THE CONGRESS — WASHINGTON'S CONTINUED VIGILANCE — THE BRITISH FLEET LINGER — BOSTON FORTIFIED — TROOPS SENT TO NEW YORK — DEPARTURE OF THE BRITISH FLEET — PUTNAM ORDERED TO NEW YORK — WASHINGTON AND THE MAIN ARMY FOLLOW — BRITISH VESSELS DRIVEN FROM BOSTON HARBOR — PREPARATIONS AT NEW YORK FOR THE ENEMY — EFFECTS OF THE VICTORY IN ENGLAND — THE MINISTERS REBUKED — WARM DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT — MINISTRY TRIUMPHANT — EMBARKATION OF TROOPS FOR AMERICA — THE BROTHERS HOWE MADE COMMISSIONERS TO NEGOTIATE FOR PEACE.

During the week succeeding the evacuation of Boston, that city presented a curious spectacle. Intelligence of the joyful event had spread rapidly over New England, and those who had been in exile for months, returned to their homes. The people of the neighboring towns flocked in by hundreds, to view the redeemed city in its sad condition, and to look upon the military works erected there by the British; and many soldiers from inland places, who had never been in a seaport town, were anxious to gratify their curiosity by viewing it. All seemed to forget that the virus of pestilence might be lurking in every house, and infecting the very air with its poisonous breath, for the small-pox had prevailed there for several months.

Washington was compelled to use stringent measures for the protection of his army and the careless people, from the common danger. On the nineteenth, in general orders, he positively forbade all officers, soldiers, and others, entering Boston without a pass, unless sent in upon duty. "As soon as the selectmen report the town to be cleansed from the infection," he said, "liberty will

be given to those who have business there to go in. The inhabitants belonging to the town will be permitted to return to their habitations, proper persons being appointed at the Neck, and at Charlestown ferry, to grant them passes."

At every step in the city, were seen woful marks of the heavy heel of military rule. Many of the finest houses had been greatly injured; yet some of those belonging to the more opulent were not much damaged. "The town," wrote Washington to John Hancock, on the nineteenth, "although it has suffered greatly, is not in so bad a state as I expected to find it; and I have a particular pleasure in being able to inform you, sir, that your house has received no damage worth mentioning. Your furniture is in tolerable order, and the family pictures are all left entire and untouched." But fine shade-trees had been cut down; churches had been disfigured; ornamental enclosures were broken or destroyed, and the public buildings were shamefully defaced. The spacious old South meeting-house, as we have seen, had been turned into a riding-school. Dirt and gravel were spread over the floor; one gallery was allotted to spectators; another was fitted up as a refreshment room; and many books and manuscripts of Prince's fine library adjoining, had been used for kindling fires in the stove. The parsonage-house belonging to that society, had been pulled down for fuel; the old North chapel, built almost a hundred years before, and the steeple of the West church, were used for the same purpose. Liberty-Tree,* under whose shadow the children of the

* "Liberty-Tree" was destroyed toward the close of August, 1775. The "Essex Gazette," dated the thirty-first of August, in describing the destruction of this tree, said: "They made a furious attack upon it. After a long spell of laughing and grinning, sweating, swearing, and foaming with malice diabolical, they cut down the tree because it bore the name of liberty. A soldier was killed by falling from one of its branches during the operation." In a poetic tract published in 1775, allusion is thus made to the unfortunate victim:—

"A tory soldier on its topmost limb—
The genius of the shade looked stern at him,
And marked him out that self-same hour to dine
Where unsnuffed lamps burn low at Pluto's shrine,
Then tripped his feet from off their cautious stand;
Pale turned the wretch — he spread each helpless hand,
But spread in vain — with headlong force he fell,
Nor stopped descending till he stopped in hell."

Pilgrims had sported, and in later times, earnest patriots had assembled, furnished fourteen cords of wood; and the beautiful Common, the pride of the inhabitants, was scarred by fortifications. Faneuil hall had been used for a playhouse, and two or three churches, besides those already mentioned, were converted into barracks for troops. Several hundred old houses had been pulled down, and the external aspect of the city was greatly changed.

Everywhere there were evidences of the haste with which the enemy had retreated. "It was precipitate," Washington wrote, "beyond anything I could have conceived. The destruction of the stores at Dunbar's camp, after Braddock's defeat, was but a faint image of what may be seen at Boston; artillery-carts cut to pieces in one place, and gun-carriages in another; shells broken here, shots buried there, and everything carrying with it the face of disorder and confusion, as also of distress." To Colonel Reed, he wrote: "They have not, from a rough estimate, left less than thirty thousand pounds sterling worth of his majesty's property behind them, in provisions and stores, vessels, rugs, blankets, &c.," besides heavy ordnance which they left, "with such abuse as their hurry would permit them to bestow.... Valuable vessels are left with only a mast or bowsprit cut down—some of them loaded; their works all standing, upon examination of which, especially that at Bunker's hill, we find amazingly strong: twenty thousand men could not have carried it against one thousand, had that work been well defended. The town of Boston was almost impregnable—every avenue fortified."

On the twenty-first, Washington issued a proclamation, intended to produce friendly feelings between the soldiers and the citizens. The former were ordered to "live in the strictest peace and amity with the inhabitants;" and in the event of any officer or soldier receiving an insult from any of the inhabitants, he should not use violence, but "seek redress in a legal way." He threatened with severe punishment those who should be found guilty of theft and robbery; and the inhabitants were called upon to make known to the quartermaster-general all stores belonging to the ministerial

army, that might be remaining or secreted in the town; and whosoever should appropriate any of such stores to his or their own use, was to be "considered as an enemy to America, and to be treated accordingly." All officers of the continental army were enjoined to assist the civil magistrates "in the execution of their duty, and to promote peace and good order." This proclamation had a very salutary effect, and harmony and order soon prevailed in Boston.

When intelligence of the expulsion of the enemy went forth, it awakened responses in every patriot's heart like those evoked by sweetest music, and there was scarcely a discordant note in the general harmony of praise and blessings for the commander-in-chief that rolled over the land, and poured in full diapason upon his ear, at Cambridge. His judgment, firmness, wisdom, prudence, and valor, were all equally commended; and the voices of fretful impatience, ungenerous rivalry, and ignorant officiousness, were silenced. Individuals and public bodies expressed their congratulations in the warmest terms.* The selectmen of Boston, in an address which they presented to Washington, said:—

"Happy are we that this acquisition has been made with so little effusion of human blood,† which, next to the Divine favor, permit us to ascribe to your excellency's wisdom, evidenced in every part of the long besiegement. If it be possible," they continued, "to enhance the noble feelings of that person, who, from the most affluent enjoyments, could throw himself into the hardships of a camp to save his country, uncertain of success, 'tis then possible

* George Mason, of Gunston hall, his friend from his youth up, wrote, on the third of April: "We have just received the welcome news of your having, with so much address and success, dislodged the ministerial troops, and taken possession of the town of Boston. I congratulate you most heartily upon this glorious and important event; an event which will render General Washington's name immortal in the annals of America, endear his memory to the latest posterity, and entitle him to those thanks, which Heaven appointed as the reward of public virtue."

General Lee, on his way southward, wrote at Williamsburg, in Virginia: "I most sincerely congratulate you, I congratulate the public, on the great and glorious event, your possession of Boston. It will be a most bright page in the annals of America, and a most abominable black one in those of the beldam Britain. Go on, my dear general; crown yourself with glory, and establish the liberties and lustre of your country on a foundation more permanent than the Capitol Rock."

† "It will be to his honor to mention," says Gordon, "that in private conversation he [Washington] expressed himself to this purpose: 'The recovery of Boston, by the speedy flight of the enemy, is more satisfactory than a victory gained at the expense of much bloodshed.'"

this victory will heighten your excellency's happiness, when you consider that you have not only saved a large, elegant, and once populous city, from total destruction, but relieved the few wretched inhabitants from all the horrors of a besieged town, from the insults and abuses of a disgraced and chagrined army, and restored many inhabitants to their quiet habitations, who had fled for safety to the bosom of their country." These generous words invoked a grateful response, in which Washington said: "Your virtuous efforts in the cause of freedom, and the unparalleled fortitude with which you have sustained the greatest of all human calamities, justly entitle you to the grateful remembrance of your American brethren; and I heartily pray that the hand of tyranny may never more disturb your repose, and that every blessing of a kind Providence may give happiness and prosperity to the town of Boston."

A few days afterward, a joint committee of the Massachusetts house of representatives waited upon Washington, and presented him with a long and flattering testimonial. "May you go on," said the address, "approved by Heaven, revered by all good men, and dreaded by those tyrants who claim their fellow-men as their property." It invoked many blessing upon him and his country, and drew from him a feeling reply.

Intelligence of the victory reached New York on the twenty-third, and produced a mingled feeling of joy and fear, because the destination of the fugitive troops was uncertain, and it appeared probable that their city would be Howe's next resting-place. On the following day (Sunday) the express, with the news, reached Philadelphia; and soon after the assembling of Congress, on Monday morning, Washington's despatch of the nineteenth was read by Secretary Thomson. At the conclusion of the reading, John Adams laid upon the table a written resolution, as follows:—

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Congress, in their own name, and in the name of the thirteen United Colonies, whom they represent, be presented to his excellency, General Washington, and the officers and soldiers under his command, for their wise and spirited

conduct in the siege and acquisition of Boston; and that a medal of gold be struck in commemoration of this great event, and presented to his excellency; and that a committee of three be appointed to prepare a letter of thanks, and a proper device for the medal."

John Adams, John Jay, and Stephen Hopkins, were appointed a committee, in pursuance of the above resolution, and on the second of April, they brought in a draft of a letter to the commander-in-chief, in the following words, which was agreed to; and a copy was sent to him, signed by John Hancock, the president:—

"Sir: It gives me the most sensible pleasure to convey to you, by order of Congress, the only tribute which a free people will ever consent to pay, the tribute of thanks and gratitude to their friends and benefactors. The disinterested and patriotic principles which led you to the field, have also led you to glory; and it affords no little consolation to your countrymen to reflect, that, as a peculiar greatness of mind induced you to decline any compensation for serving them, except the pleasure of promoting their happiness, they may, without your permission, bestow upon you the largest share of their affections and esteem.

"Those pages in the annals of America will record your title to a conspicuous place in the temple of fame, which shall inform posterity, that, under your direction, an undisciplined band of husbandmen, in the course of a few months, became soldiers; and that the desolation meditated against the country by a brave army of veterans, commanded by the most experienced generals, but employed by bad men in the worst of causes, was, by the fortitude of your troops, and the address of their officers, next to the kind interposition of Providence, confined for near a year within such narrow limits, as scarcely to admit more room than was necessary for the encampments and fortifications they lately abandoned. Accept, therefore, sir, the thanks of the United Colonies, unanimously declared by their delegates to be due to you and the brave officers and troops under your command; and be pleased to communicate to them this distinguished mark of the approbation of their coun-

try. The Congress have ordered a golden medal, adapted to the occasion, to be struck, and when finished, to be presented to you."

On the same day, Mr. Adams wrote a private letter to Washington, and said: "I congratulate you, as well as all the friends of mankind, on the reduction of Boston; an event which appeared to me of so great and decisive importance, that, the next morning after the arrival of the news, I did myself the honor to move the thanks of Congress to your excellency, and that a medal of gold should be struck in commemoration of it. Congress have been pleased to appoint me, with two other gentlemen, to prepare a device. I should be very happy to have your excellency's sentiments concerning a proper one." This medal was afterward struck in Paris, from a die cut by Duvivier.*

In several places public banquets were had in honor of the victory over the ministerial troops; the voice of public and private prayer and thanksgiving was heard in every part of the land; and the faculty of Harvard college, on the third of April, conferred on Washington the honorary title of Doctor of Laws. They said: "Whereas academical degrees were originally instituted for this purpose, that men, eminent for knowledge, wisdom, and virtue, who have highly merited of the republic of letters, should be rewarded with the honor of these laurels, there is the greatest propriety in conferring such honor on that very illustrious gentleman, George Washington." Then recounting his sacrifices and his services, they concluded with the following proclamation: "Know ye, therefore, that we, the president and fellows of Harvard college, in Cambridge (with the consent of the honored and revered overseers of our academy), have constituted and created the aforesaid gentleman, George Washington, who merits the highest honor,

* This medal is a little more than two and a half inches in diameter. On one side is a profile likeness of Washington, with the Latin legend: "GEORGIO WASHINGTON SVPREMO DVCI EXERCI TVVM ADSERTORI LIBERTATIS COMITIA AMERICANA;" ("The American Congress to George Washington, commander-in-chief of its armies, the assertors of freedom"). On the reverse is seen troops advancing toward a town; others marching toward the water; ships in view; General Washington in front, and mounted, with his staff, whose attention he is directing to the embarking enemy. The legend is—"HOSTIBVS PRIMO FVGATIS. BOSTONIVM, recvperatvm, XVII Martii, MDCCLXXVI;" ("The enemy for the first time put to flight. Boston recovered, seventeenth of March, 1776").

doctor of laws, the law of nature, and of nations, and the civil law; and have given and granted to him, at the same time, all rights, privileges, and honors, to the said degree pertaining."*

After the toils, anxieties, and patient endurance that had been suffered in maintaining the protracted blockade and siege of Boston, these expressions of public confidence and approval were grateful to the feelings of the commander-in-chief, and gave him additional strength for future achievements. They coincided with the suggestions of his own conscience, and the behests of his own judgment. Washington well knew that the victory just won was only a prelude to other conflicts, and that labor, hard labor, was to be performed, and not repose, absolute repose, enjoyed. He well knew that vigilance was the anchor on which safety depended; and with him vigilance was as sleepless as the twinkling stars.

For ten days the British fleet lingered in Nantasket road, near Boston, preparing for a tempestuous voyage off a bleak and dangerous coast, when the storm of the vernal equinox was expected. Their real destination, however, was unknown to the American commander, and he was sorely perplexed. "The enemy," he said, in a letter to Colonel Reed on the twenty-fifth, "have the best knack of puzzling people I have ever met with in my life. They have blown up, burnt, and demolished the castle totally, and are now all in Nantasket road." Various conjectures were expressed, and few believed that Halifax was their destination. Washington was satisfied that Howe was preparing to retrieve his disgrace, after receiving reinforcements, or to sail for New York; and he made his dispositions accordingly. He caused a large and strong work to be thrown up on Fort hill, in Boston, a position that commanded the whole harbor. He ordered the fortifications upon the Neck to be demolished, so as to open a free communication between town and country. On the day after the evacuation, he had ordered five

* This instrument was addressed "to all faithful in Christ to whom these presents shall come, greeting:" and was signed by

Samuel Langdon, S. T. D., Pres't., Andreas Elliot, S. T. D. (Hol.) LL. D.,
Nathaniel Appleton, S. T. D., Samuel Cooper, S. T. D.,
Johannes Winthrop, Mat. et Phi. P., Johannes Wadsworth, Log. et Eth. Pre.

continental regiments, the battalion of riflemen, and two companies of artillery, to proceed to New York, under General Heath, by land as far as Norwich, in Connecticut, and thence by water through the sound. He also called for two thousand militia from Connecticut, nd one thousand from New Jersey, to be thrown, without delay, into the city of New York, to co-operate with the forces already there in opposing the landing of the British until the main army should arrive.

On the evening of the twenty-seventh of March, the whole British fleet, except five vessels, weighed anchor and stood out for sea. Washington immediately ordered Brigadier-General Sullivan to lead a brigade of six regiments to New York; and within a few days afterward, the remainder of the army followed, except five regiments under General Ward, who were left for the protection of Boston. On the twenty-ninth, General Putnam was ordered to New York, to take the chief command of the troops there, General Lee having been appointed by Congress, commander-in-chief in the southern department. Putnam was instructed to continue the execution of the plans proposed by Lee for fortifying the city, and securing the passes of the North and East rivers. His instructions closed with these words: "Devoutly praying, that the Power which has hitherto sustained the American arms, may continue to bless them with his divine protection, I bid you farewell."

The last brigade that was to go forward, left Cambridge, under Brigadier General Spencer, on the fourth of April, and Washington set out for New York on the same day. After the departure of the army, the people of Boston felt great apprehension of Howe's return. The British vessels that lingered in Nantasket road were joined, soon afterward, by seven transports, filled with Scotch Highlanders. All classes of the citizens of Boston assisted in building fortifications on Noddle's island (now East Boston), and in strengthening the other defences. These operations were carried on chiefly under the command of Colonel Gridley, and Boston, with the few American troops, was considered too strong for any force that was left in the harbor to assail with success. Finally,

early in June, General Lincoln of the Massachusetts militia proposed a plan for driving the British fleet from the harbor. It was sanctioned by the Massachusetts assembly, and put into execution on the fourteenth. The militia in connection with some of Ward's regulars took post at several eligible points; and a company with two eighteen-pounders and a thirteen-inch mortar was stationed on Long Island. A simultaneous cannonade was opened upon the little fleet. Its commander, perceiving the peril, made signals for weighing anchor; and after blowing up the lighthouse, he spread his sails and went to sea, leaving Boston harbor and vicinity entirely free from enemies to the republican cause, except a few dissimulating tories, who lurked in secret places.

By a reprehensible lack of foresight, other disasters befell the British. "To complete all the woful blunders," says a late British writer, "which had been committed, Howe, in sailing away, left no cruiser in Boston bay to warn the ships expected from England that the place was no longer in our possession; and a few days after, several of our store-ships sailed right into the harbor, and fell into the hands of the Americans, before they discovered that George Washington and not King George was master of Boston. One of these ships alone — the *Hope* — had on board fifteen hundred barrels of gunpowder, besids carbines, bayonets, gun-carriages, and all sorts of tools necessary for the army and artillery. In appropriating this much-wanted supply, the jubilant New-Englanders said it was the gift of Providence, whose doings were marvellous in their eyes! But still worse happened in consequence of Howe's unpardonable negligence, Lieutenant-Colonel Archibald Campbell, with seven hundred men fresh from England, ran right into Boston harbor, not knowing but that the place was still in our hands. He was taken prisoner, of course."*

Washington went through Providence, Norwich, and New London, in his journey to New York, in order to see and expedite the embarkation of his troops. At Providence he was greeted by Governor Cooke and his council; and there he met Commodore

* Pictorial History of England.

Hopkins, who had just returned from a cruise to the Bermudas, with the spoils of victory. At Norwich he had an interview with Governor Trumbull, and leading members of the committee of safety; and he was escorted into New Haven by a cavalcade of gentlemen, amid the huzzas of the people, the waving of kerchiefs in fair hands, and other demonstrations of joy and respect.

The roads were very bad, and there was so much difficulty in procuring teams for transporting the baggage and stores, that the march of the army was greatly protracted. The commander-in-chief, who had carefully inspected every arrangement for marching and sailing, did not arrive in New York until the thirteenth, and the different divisions of the army were not assembled there until the twentieth.

Although there appeared much confusion, yet the aspect of military affairs in New York was generally satisfactory to the commander-in-chief. Lord Stirling had prosecuted with vigor the labor of fortifying the city and vicinity. A thousand continentals had taken possession of Governor's island, in the harbor, on the night of the tenth of April, and constructed a redoubt upon the western side; and on the same night a regiment passed over to Red Hook, on the Long Island shore, and upon a small island near the beach, they erected a redoubt for four eighteen-pounders, and called it Fort Defiance. Washington heartily approved of all that had been done, and proceeded to push forward the defences of the city. He soon ascertained that Howe had actually sailed for Halifax; and as the British vessels in the harbor of New York soon retired to Sandy Hook, twenty-five miles below, he discharged the Connecticut and New Jersey militia, formed a regular camp near the city, and surveying the whole field of continental operations, he conceived and prepared wise plans for future movements.

When intelligence of the flight of the British army from Boston reached England, at the close of April, it produced great astonishment and indignation, and the ministry were denounced in Parliament, in newspapers, and in pamphlets, and ridiculed by the pencil of the caricaturist. They endeavored to conceal the real character

of the transaction, by suppressing, as far as possible, full intelligence of the event, and assuming a careless tone and manner, as if the occurrence was one of no great consequence. When they could no longer hide the shame, and the town was filled with disparaging rumors of every kind, they made the following official announcement in the "London Gazette," on the third of May, hoping, no doubt, by its tone and assertions, to blunt the keen edge of criticism:—

"General Howe, commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces in North America, having taken a resolution, on the seventh of March, to remove from Boston to Halifax with the troops under his command, and such of the inhabitants, with their effects, as were desirous to continue under the protection of his majesty's forces; the embarkation was effected on the seventeenth of the same month, with the greatest order and regularity, and without the least interruption from the rebels. When the packet came away, the first division of transports was under sail, and the remainder were preparing to follow in a few days, the admiral leaving behind as many men-of-war as could be spared from the convoy for the security and protection of such vessels as might be bound to Boston."

Parliament was then in session, and this deceptive announcement evoked the ire of the opposition in both houses. The fiery Barré would not let the ministry be quietly wrapped in their cloak of mystery and apparent unconcern, but arraigned them at the bar of public opinion, by moving, in the house of commons, on the sixth of May, for an address to his majesty, praying that copies of the despatches of General Howe and Admiral Shuldham might be laid before the house. In the debate that arose on this motion, the ministry were severely handled; and the declarations of Lord North only increased the exasperation of those who knew his statements to be utterly untruthful. He declared that the army was not compelled to abandon Boston; that General Howe had entered into no capitulation or agreement with Washington; that the troops had embarked perfectly at their ease; that the evacua-

tion of Boston was not inglorious nor disgraceful; and that it was only a change of position for a wise purpose, Great Britain having the same men and the same ships, only in another place. This assertion was the theme of severe comment, not only then, but in future debates. In a speech delivered in the commons toward the close of 1777, John Wilkes said: "Let us recollect, sir, what passed after Boston was taken by the British forces. Our general was soon besieged in that capital of New England, ignominiously cooped up there many months with twenty regiments, and at last driven from thence. I know the coloring given to this retreat by the court party among us, and have been nauseated with the cant terms of our generals 'changing their quarters,' and 'shifting their positions;' but I know, likewise, that their artillery and stores were left behind. All the military men of this country now confess that the retreat of General Howe was a flight—as much so, sir, as that of Mohammed from Mecca."

Lord George Germain attempted to explain, saying that he understood that General Howe never intended to begin operations from Boston; that there was no agreement concerning the evacuation, between the generals; and that Washington having changed his position, no doubt obliged Howe to change his! These weak defences of the ministry were assailed with scorn, and were completely demolished by the falchion blows of Lord John Cavendish, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Ellis, General Conway, and others. The strong logic and keen satire of Barré smote them like a whip of scorpions; and the thunders of Burke's eloquent denunciations shook the administration until it trembled with fear. He declared that every measure that had been adopted or pursued was directed to impoverish England and to emancipate America; and though in twelve months "nearly one thousand dollars a man had been spent for salt beef and sour krout, the troops could not have remained ten days longer if the heavens had not rained down manna and quails."

In the house of lords the duke of Manchester called for the despatches, on the tenth of May, and in a remarkable speech, he severely censured the ministers while reviewing recent events at

Boston. He spoke in terms of admiration of the martial spirit displayed by the Americans on Bunker's hill, when "an apothecary's late 'prentice [Warren] led forth armies, displayed the warrior's skill and intrepidity, and met a death a Roman might have envied." He spoke of Arnold's expedition across the wilderness, as a march "that Hannibal would have admired;" and then paid a noble tribute to the wisdom and skill of Washington in conducting the siege of Boston. Of the evacuation, he said: "We are informed of this extraordinary event by a gazette, published by authority from government, in which it is related, that General Howe had quitted Boston; no circumstances mentioned to palliate the event, no vail but that of silence to cast over the disgrace. But, my lords," he continued, "though government account is short and uncircumstantial, yet private intelligence, public report, on which, till it is with authenticity denied, I must rely, informs us that General Howe quitted not Boston of his own free will, but that a superior enemy, by repeated efforts, by extraordinary works, by fire of their batteries, rendered the place untenable. I mean not the most distant censure on him; his reputation stands fixed on too firm a basis to be easily shaken. I do believe all that in that situation could by the best officers be attempted, was tried to the utmost. But, my lords, circumstances obliged him to quit that post he could not possibly maintain. The mode of the retreat may, to the general, do infinite honor, but it does dishonor to the British nation. Let this transaction be dressed in what garb you please, the fact remains, that the army which was sent to reduce the province of Massachusetts bay, has been driven from the capital, and that the standard of the provincial army now waves in triumph over the walls of Boston."

"The army of Britain," said the duke, "equipped with every possible essential of war; a chosen army, with chosen officers, backed by the power of a mighty fleet, sent to correct revolted subjects; sent to chastise a resisting city; sent to assert Britain's authority; has, for many tedious months, been imprisoned within that town by the provincial army; who, their watchful guards, permitted

them no inlet to the country; who braved all their efforts, and defied all their skill and ability in war could ever attempt. One way, indeed, of escape was left; the fleet is yet respected; to the fleet the army has recourse; and British generals, whose name never met with a blot of dishonor, are forced to quit that town which was the first object of the war, the immediate cause of the hostilities, the place of arms which has cost this nation more than a million to defend."

The earl of Suffolk attempted a defence of the ministry in reply, and was followed by the marquis of Rockingham, the severity of whose language was enhanced by his exact information, derived from letters on the spot, which gave him a battery of undeniable facts, whose force could not be resisted. Referring to the evacuation, and the denial of any understanding between the generals, the marquis said: "If those accounts are true, of which I have very little doubt, your lordships will perceive, though possibly there might have been no formal convention or capitulation signed, which I understood was avoided by the generals on both sides, for particular reasons, that in whatever manner the business might have been negotiated, it had every substantial requisite of a treaty or compromise, as much as if it had been ever so solemnly authenticated or subscribed. The troops were permitted to evacuate the town without interruption, because they engaged, on the other hand, not to burn or destroy it, either previous to their departure, or after they got on board their ships."

This debate, in its fullness, and the pamphlets, newspapers, ballads, satires, and caricatures of the times, reveal the state of public feeling in England with unmistakable clearness. At that time, the people — the intelligent, thinking people of England — were largely in opposition to the ministry, and sympathized warmly with their oppressed brethren in America; but in Parliament there seemed to be a spirit of opposition to every dictate of common sense, and every sentiment of justice and humanity, that amounted to infatuation, and gave the ministry a blind and powerful support. That spirit was rife at this time; and that majority voted down every

proposition to elicit full information respecting operations in America. The evacuation of Boston was approved by the king and his ministers; and Lord George Germain wrote a soothing letter to Howe, deploring the miscarriage of the general's despatches hitherto,* praising his prudence, and assuring him that his conduct had "given the fullest proofs of his majesty's wisdom and discernment in the choice of so able and brave an officer, to command his troops in America."

Previous to the proceedings in Parliament in relation to the evacuation of Boston, the British legislature had been the theatre of some strong debates on American affairs, growing out of propositions for reinforcing the army and navy there, and prosecuting the war with vigor. We have already considered the wicked bargain with German princes, for mercenary soldiers to send to America, and the estimates made by the committee of supply. These proceedings had been followed by attempts in the house of lords to prevent a continuance of hostilities, but in vain. The die was cast, the sword was unsheathed, and the voices of reason and humanity were not eloquent enough to persuade the ministers to recede. Indeed it was difficult for them to do so. Their German hirelings were already embarked, and were hourly expected in England; and while these debates were going on, the Brunswickers, under General (the Baron) Reidesel, arrived. An English squadron was also ready for departure, having on board British troops, under Generals Burgoyne and Phillips. These, with the Brunswickers, left Spithead in thirty vessels, on the fourth of April, for the St. Lawrence, to assist Carleton in driving the republican army out of Canada, and to invade the revolted provinces from the north.

Richard, Earl Howe, had been appointed to the chief command of the fleet destined to co-operate with his brother, the general. He was a man of generous impulses, and he hesitated long before he would accept the command of a force destined to oppress and

* It appears that Howe sent despatches to England on the twenty-third of October, 1775, by the hands of Major Thompson (afterward the celebrated Count Rumford), and those were the last from him that reached the ministry previous to the evacuation

harm his fellow-subjects in America. In Parliament, a few days before he sailed, he spoke with much warmth upon the horrors of civil war, and declared that he "knew no struggle so painful as that between a soldier's duties as an officer and as a man. If left to his own choice, he should decline serving; but if commanded, it became his duty, and he should not refuse to obey." He *was* commanded to go to America; and on the sixth of May, letters-patent, by his majesty's order, passed under the great seal, constituting the brothers Richard and William Howe, "commissioners for restoring peace to the colonies in North America, and for granting a pardon to such of his majesty's subjects, now in rebellion, as shall deserve the royal mercy." On the same day, Commodore Hotham, with all the transports bearing the first division of the Hessians, under Lieutenant-General De Heister, sailed from St. Helen for America; and five days afterward, Admiral Howe followed in the *Eagle* man-of-war. Earlier than this, Lord Cornwallis had embarked for North Carolina with seven regiments, convoyed by a fleet under Sir Peter Parker, to co-operate with General Clinton in support of the Scotch loyalists in that province. He arrived at Cape Fear a few days before Admiral Howe sailed from England.

Such were the preparations made by the British ministry to open the campaign against the American "rebels," in the spring of 1776. The entire land force mustered into service for the purpose, amounted to about thirty-five thousand men, well equipped and provisioned. These consisted of seventeen thousand Germans; about four thousand Britons under Cornwallis; six thousand Highlanders and others, who sailed in May; and eight thousand already in or near America, under Generals Howe and Clinton. Besides these, there were marines in the navy, and a naval force of seventy-two sail, to blockade the coasts, and bombard towns if necessary.

CHAPTER VII.

EFFORTS OF THE CIVIL POWER IN AMERICA — GENEROSITY TOWARD THE TORIES — HUMANITY RECOMMENDED — AFFAIRS IN CANADA — REINFORCEMENTS FOR THE ARMY THERE CALLED FOR — MEASURES TO PROCURE THEM — ARNOLD AT QUEBEC — LEE APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND IN CANADA — NEW ARRANGEMENT OF MILITARY DEPARTMENTS — LEE ORDERED SOUTH, AND GENERAL THOMAS SENT TO CANADA — SCHUYLER IN THE MIDDLE DEPARTMENT — STATE OF AFFAIRS IN CANADA — ARNOLD KEEPS UP THE BLOCKADE OF QUEBEC — HE VAINLY IMPLORES THE CO-OPERATION OF WOOSTER — PRIZES TO BE WON — REINFORCEMENTS — SMALL-POX IN THE ARMY — WOOSTER AT QUEBEC — HIS TREATMENT OF ARNOLD — ARNOLD AGAIN DISABLED — HE RETIRES TO MONTREAL — ARRIVAL OF GENERAL THOMAS — THE AMERICANS DRIVEN FROM QUEBEC — CARLETON'S HUMANITY.

WHILE the British ministry were preparing to end the rebellion by a vigorous campaign, the civil and military authorities in the colonies were active in preparations to defend their rights, even at the expense and suffering of a protracted war, if it should be necessary. They had fully compared the cost and the advantages involved in the contest, and had resolved to enjoy freedom or perish in the attempt to maintain it. The continental Congress, whose power was every day growing stronger as common dangers increased, worked in faithful co-operation with the several provincial authorities, and the commander-in-chief of the armies; while a desire for absolute political independence of Great Britain was, as with electric flashes, nerving the hearts of the people to determined resistance. Yet there was a large class of citizens under influences adverse to the republican sentiment, who, through ignorance or selfishness, were active or passive opponents of the Congress. These were numerous; so numerous that government officials here predicated their best hopes of success for the ministerial measures against the "rebels," upon the expected services of this class.

Fully persuaded that a large number of these loyalists were honest and well-meaning people, and were made enemies to the republicans by "the arts and address of ministerial agents," the Congress considered the matter wisely, and, on the second of January, 1776, "*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the different committees, and other friends to American liberty, in the said colonies, to treat all such persons with kindness and attention; to consider them as the inhabitants of a country determined to be free, and to view their errors as proceeding rather from want of information, than from want of virtue or public spirit; to explain to them the origin, nature, and extent of the present controversy; to acquaint them with the fate of the numerous petitions presented to his majesty, as well by assemblies as Congress, for reconciliation and redress of grievances; to unfold to them the various arts of administration to ensnare and enslave us, and the manner in which we have been cruelly driven to defend, by arms, those very rights, liberties, and estates, which we, and our forefathers, had so long enjoyed unmolested in the reign of his present majesty's predecessors. And it is hereby recommended to all conventions and assemblies in these colonies, liberally to distribute among the people the proceedings of this and the former Congress, the late speeches of the great patriots in both houses of Parliament, relative to American grievances, and such other pamphlets and papers as tend to elucidate the American cause, the Congress being fully persuaded that the more our right to the enjoyment of our ancient liberties and privileges is examined, the more just and necessary our present opposition to ministerial tyranny will appear."

This resolution was followed by others, recommending the employment of the most stringent measures against unworthy tories, by the "different assemblies, conventions, and committees or councils of safety in the United Colonies." Also, after reciting the cruelties that had been practised by the enemy, in burning towns, plundering and distressing the inhabitants, and bringing the savage hordes from the wilderness upon them, they advised the American people, by resolution, "to continue mindful that humanity

ought to distinguish the brave, that cruelty should find no admission among a free people, and to take care that no page in the annals of America be stained by a recital of any action which justice or Christianity may condemn, and to rest assured, that whenever retaliation may be necessary or tend to their security, this Congress will undertake the disagreeable task."

The effect of these resolutions was very salutary. Great numbers of people were not only soothed on the one hand and intimidated on the other, but thousands who had huzzaed loudly for the king and Parliament were silenced, or became active republican partisans. The effect in England was to raise up many friends to the cause there; and words like the following came to cheer and encourage the Americans in their virtuous course: "The resolutions of January second do you infinite honor, and will undoubtedly serve the cause. Your conduct, I trust, will be noble, as that is great and good."*

Affairs in Canada now attracted the earnest attention of the Congress. The conquests already achieved, and others in expectation, made it important to have a sufficient force there to maintain the ground that might be won, and to strengthen the confidence of the timid Canadians in the power of the United Colonies. Accordingly, on the eighth of January, the Congress, by resolution, approved of the raising of a battalion of Canadians, under Colonel James Livingston, a resident of that province, and resolved "that nine battalions, including that of Canadians under Colonel Livingston, be kept up and maintained the present year in the defence of Canada." It was also resolved, that a battalion each from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, should be ordered to march immediately for Albany; and that one battalion, for the service in Canada, should be raised in each of the provinces of New Hampshire, Connecticut, and New York. Nine days afterward the Congress received a letter from General Schuyler, announcing the disasters at Quebec, and the death of the brave Montgomery and his companions. That letter was a confirmation of a rumor that

* Arthur Lee to Dr. Franklin, Feb. 13, 1776.

had spread a gloom over the federal city early in the morning, and caused the hall of Congress to be filled with anxious faces at the opening of the session.

Fully alive to the critical condition of the remnant of the republican army in that far northern province, and the importance of maintaining advantages already gained in that direction, the Congress, on the following day, resolved that the troops in Canada should be reinforced "with all possible despatch." An express was sent to the New Jersey committee of safety, "to quicken the officers" employed in levying the forces directed to be raised there, for the north; and an application for troops was also made to the authorities of Pennsylvania. An express was sent to Cambridge, to request General Washington to detach a battalion from his army, to the St. Lawrence, if the service would permit it; and the New England colonies were earnestly requested to furnish troops already ordered, immediately. Washington was also desired by Congress to send a general officer to assume the chief command of the troops in Canada, because General Schuyler was too much enfeebled by disease to take the field, and no other officer of his rank was then in the northern department.

Before the express reached Cambridge, Washington had received a letter from Schuyler, dated the thirteenth of January, informing him of the disasters and sad bereavement in Canada, and asking him to send, with all possible despatch, a reinforcement of three thousand men, by way of Onion river and Lake Champlain, to join the Americans on the St. Lawrence. Washington, as we have seen,* laid this letter before a council of general officers, and some members of the general council of Massachusetts, on the eighteenth, and measures for reinforcing the northern army with New England militia, were agreed to. Everything that could be done for the relief of the republicans in Canada was performed, but the inclement season rendered all movements in that direction tardy, and Colonel Arnold and his shattered army were compelled to maintain the blockade of Quebec, for several weeks, almost alone,

* Page 47.

in the midst of the great perils and privations incident to a Canadian winter.

On the twentieth of January, the continental Congress promoted Colonel Arnold to brigadier; and every exertion was made to strengthen his hands. But being severely wounded, having only a handful of men, and his military chest being exhausted, he could do nothing more than keep his position, and wait for reinforcements and a paymaster with funds. Meanwhile, every letter from him, from Schuyler, and from Wooster, showed the necessity of having an active general officer in Canada, clothed with ample discretionary powers, and provided with abundance of means. Toward General Lee many eyes were turned. He had once campaigned in Canada, during the French war, and was acquainted with the language of the people. He was brave and energetic, and would infuse his own spirit into his troops. In many respects he was a man after Arnold's own heart; and soon after Montgomery's death, Arnold, in a letter to Washington, expressed a "hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing General Lee, or some experienced officer" there.

In a letter to the president of Congress, on the thirteenth of January, Washington mentioned Lee in connection with the command at the north, but with evident reluctance; and in a letter to that officer, written on the same day, he said, "The Congress desire I should send an active general to Canada. I fancy, when they made the demand, that they did not think General Schuyler would continue in that station, which he has given me to understand, in some letters from him, that he would. Should they not approve of the New York expedition, and think another general necessary for the northern department, it is probable they will fix on you to take the command there. I should be sorry to have you removed so far from the scene; but if the service there requires your presence, it will be a fine field for the exertion of your admirable talents."

Finally, on the seventeenth of February, in pursuance of the suggestions of a committee to whom several letters from the north

had been referred, the Congress resolved to direct General Lee to proceed to Canada immediately, and take the chief command of the troops in that province. It was also determined to direct General Schuyler to repair to New York city, as soon as his health should permit, and take command of the forces, and direct the military affairs there. Two days before, Doctor Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, were appointed a committee to repair to Canada, there to represent the civil power of the colonies, under instructions from Congress; and other measures were adopted to strengthen the hands of Lee.

These resolutions had scarcely gone forth, when the Congress changed their plans. Convinced that the enemy, in the ensuing campaign, would direct their chief operations against the middle and southern colonies, the Congress divided these into two departments; one comprehending New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland; and the other Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. The former was placed under the command of a major-general and two brigadiers, and the latter under a major-general and four brigadiers. Major-General Lee was appointed to the command of the southern department, assisted by Brigadier-Generals Armstrong, Lewis, Moore, and Howe, who were commissioned on the first of March. At the same time, Major-General Schuyler, whose health remained infirm, was appointed to the command of the troops in the first division above named, which was called the middle department, and was directed to establish his headquarters at Albany, until further orders, that he might forward supplies to the army in Canada, confer with the Indians, superintend the operations necessary for the defence of New York and Hudson's river, and have a general supervision of military affairs in that quarter. The Congress expressed their reliance upon his efforts to "complete the work so conspicuously begun, and well conducted" by him, in the invasion of Canada. William Alexander (earl of Stirling), and Colonel William Thompson, were commissioned brigadiers on the first of March, and appointed to commands in the middle department, under General Schuyler.

The New England colonies composed the eastern department, and Canada the northern department. General Thomas, whose conduct at Roxbury in the blockade and siege of Boston, had been highly approved by his superiors, was promoted to major-general, and appointed to the chief command in Canada, to be assisted by Brigadiers Wooster and Arnold.

Lee was disappointed by the change which sent him southward. "As I am the only general officer on the continent who can speak and think in French," he said in a letter to Washington, four days before his departure for the South, "I confess I think it would have been more prudent to have sent me to Canada; but I shall obey with alacrity, and hope, with success."—"As a Virginian," said Washington to Lee, on hearing of the new order, "I must rejoice at the change; but as an American, I think you would have done more essential service to the cause in Canada. For, besides the advantages of speaking and thinking in French, an officer who is acquainted with their manners and customs, and has travelled in their country, must certainly take the strongest hold of their affection and confidence."*

The latter suggestion involved important considerations. The unexpected disasters at Quebec, the small and half-disorganized army of republicans in Canada unsupported by reinforcements, and the leanness of the military-chest and the commissariat, had wrought a great change among the Canadians, who were ready to join in the revolt while success appeared probable. The cheering effects of Montgomery's early victories were rapidly disappearing, and the bad conduct of many of the soldiers toward the Canadians, had produced alienations and bitterness of feeling. The clergy had been neglected, and sometimes the Roman catholic ceremonies had

* Washington had a very high opinion of the military abilities of General Lee, and in common with the great bulk of the Americans, at that time, believed in the honesty of his professions, and the *prestige* of his name. To his brother, J. Augustine Washington, the general wrote on the thirty-first of March: "General Lee, I expect, is with you before this. He is the first officer, in military knowledge and experience, we have in the whole army. He is zealously attached to the cause, honest and well meaning, but rather fickle and violent, I fear, in his temper. However, as he possesses an uncommon share of good sense and spirit, I congratulate my countrymen upon his appointment to that department."—Sparks, iii., 345.

been ridiculed; the peasantry had been maltreated by having their wood and provisions taken from them by violence; and anarchy everywhere prevailed. The Congress, therefore, performed a wise act when they appointed a committee of civilians to go to that province to establish good feeling and fair government in the portion of the domain already in possession of the continental troops. It was also important, that the right kind of a military commander should be sent there; and the appointment of General Thomas, who had also served in Canada, in campaigns of the French and Indian war, was doubtless more judicious than that of Lee.

While these preparations to assist him were in progress, Arnold was making the most of the few resources at his command, in maintaining the blockade of Quebec. As soon as the panic caused by the disasters of the thirty-first of December had subsided, that brave officer, though suffering severely, because the bones of his wounded leg were injured, examined his muster-roll and stores. He had only about eight hundred effective men, but his supplies of ammunition and artillery stores were quite ample. He wrote to Wooster that he would not be able to take the field, probably, in less than two months, and implored him, as the senior officer, to come down with reinforcements, take command, and make what he believed would be, an easy conquest of the Canadian capital. But that commander thought it not prudent either to go himself, or send reinforcements to Arnold, and for several weeks the latter was left almost wholly to himself, with the remnant of Montgomery's army.

Arnold was not discouraged, but seemed to acquire new strength as the pressure of care increased. He took measures to enlist a regiment of Canadians, three hundred strong; and he wrote to Congress on the eleventh of January, recommending them to send at least five thousand troops, well supplied with besieging implements and weapons, expressing a belief that the province of Canada might be in the hands of the republicans by the middle of March. He was assured that one half of the inhabitants in Quebec

would join the invaders and consider them liberators; that the garrison was not more than fifteen hundred strong, and a large portion of the troops were disloyal; that three thousand pounds of powder, ten thousand stand of arms, seven thousand complete suits of clothing, and a large quantity of artillery stores, were in the king's magazine there. These, with two frigates, and a number of smaller vessels in the harbor, would be the spoils of victory; and the value of the triumph would be enhanced by the acquisition of an extensive country in the interest of the United Colonies, and the liberation of three or four hundred brave men. "This," said Arnold, "appears an object of the greatest interest to us, under the circumstances."*

Toward the close of January small reinforcements came down from Montreal, in all only about one hundred and fifty men, and at about the same time, the enemy twice sallied out of Palace gate, five hundred strong, to seize two pieces of cannon, which Arnold had planted near. They were repulsed with spirit, and driven within the walls. The cautious Carleton, sure of reinforcements from England in the spring, and not doubting that the blockading army would utterly dissolve by the operations of desertion and sickness, and the disaffection of the Canadians, before the close of winter, attempted nothing more. In this he reasoned correctly. Arnold was compelled to resort to the continental paper currency, which was uncurrent among the Canadians, to purchase necessary supplies for his troops, and by proclamation, he compelled the inhabitants to receive it in pay. This disgusted them and almost put an end to enlistments of provincial militia. Many of his continentals, wearied and disheartened, left the service as fast as their terms of enlistment expired; and in February, sickness aided in so thinning his ranks, that at one time he had not more than five hundred men fit for service. But Arnold persisted in his perilous enterprise. He cut off supplies occasionally, and harassed the citizens and garrison with frequent alarms. On one occasion he completely frustrated an attempt of Carleton to nourish an insurrection among

* Autograph Letter.

the Canadians on the opposite side of the St. Lawrence, who were friendly to the Americans; and having repaired his batteries, he opened a fire upon the town, but with very slight effect, for the best men of Lamb's artillery, with their wounded commander, were prisoners within the walls of Quebec.

The spring of 1776 opened early. The snow disappeared at the beginning of March, and the ice in the St. Lawrence presented symptoms of dissolution. Reinforcements gradually swelled the ranks of the blockading army, and before the close of the month it was increased to eighteen hundred men. But an enemy more formidable than giants in armor, attacked the American camp. It was the small-pox, brought out of the city by a girl who had been a nurse in the garrison hospital. The disease spread among the republican troops, and the soldiers, terrified by its presence, inoculated themselves in defiance of all orders to the contrary. The reinforcements then daily arriving practised the forbidden operation, and on the first of May, when the army consisted of almost two thousand men, there were not nine hundred fit for duty.*

General Wooster left Montreal on the twenty-sixth of March, with some troops, and arrived at Quebec on the first of April. He found Arnold anxious to make an assault upon the town, but he suppressed everything like offensive operations. He also appeared to be either afraid or jealous of Arnold; and when, on the following day, the horse of that energetic officer fell upon him, and so greatly injured his lame leg and ankle, that he was utterly disabled, the aged brigadier appeared to feel a relief. Arnold's injury confined him ten days, during which time, General Wooster treated him with such marked neglect, that he left the camp for Montreal. He wrote to General Schuyler on the twentieth, saying: "Had I been able to take an active part, I should by no means have left the camp; but as General Wooster did not think proper to consult me in any of his matter, I was convinced that I could be of more service here than in the camp, and he very readily granted me leave of absence until recovered of my lameness."† General Schuyler,

* Gordon, ii, 63.

† Autograph Letter.

who properly valued the services of Arnold, and lamented the weakness of Wooster in refraining from consulting a counsellor so useful, replied on the second of May, and said: "I very sincerely deplore the misfortune which has deprived your country so far of your services, as that you are unable to take an immediate active part. I am very unhappy at General Wooster's inattention to you. The least reflection must have evinced the necessity of advising with you on every matter, as in the course of six months you must have acquired a knowledge of the country, of the enemy's designs, &c., &c., infinitely better than any person he can advise with."* Arnold took command at Montreal.

About three hundred of the troops before Quebec were entitled to a discharge on the fifteenth of April, but many of them remained a fortnight longer, at the earnest request of Arnold. These peremptorily refused to do duty after that officer left. Many of the others were sick with the small-pox; and when General Thomas arrived, on the first of May, there were not, as we have observed, nine hundred effective men out of nineteen hundred whose names appeared upon the returns. The ice in the lakes and St. Lawrence was breaking up and rendered those waters impassable in boats; and the roads were so bad that troops could scarcely travel. Few reinforcements consequently arrived; and there were so many posts at Quebec to be defended, that not more than three hundred men could be concentrated at one point. In all the magazines there were not more than one hundred and fifty pounds of powder, nor more than six days' provisions; and the French inhabitants had become so estranged from the republicans, by the course of events, that it was difficult to obtain supplies of any kind from them.†

Satisfied that a blockade could be no longer useful, General Thomas called a council of war on the fifth of May, composed of General Wooster and all the field officers in camp, and it was unanimously agreed, that the invalids should be immediately removed up to Three Rivers, and that preparations should be made to retreat

* Schuyler's Letter Books.

† General Thomas to Washington, May 8, 1776.

toward Montreal, because upon the first arrival of reinforcements for Carleton, the little army must inevitably fall into the hands of the enemy. On the evening of the same day, certain intelligence reached Thomas, that fifteen British ships were coming up the St. Lawrence; and the next morning, five of them appeared in sight. These were hailed with joy by the garrison. Meanwhile the Americans had embarked all their artillery and stores in boats and canoes, to be ready for a retreat.

At noon on the sixth, about two hundred men landed from the newly-arrived vessels, and joined the garrison in a sortie led by Carleton. The main body of the republicans on shore, about two hundred and fifty strong, were then on the Plains of Abraham. They had no intrenchments nor fortified lines to cover them; and as certain defeat would follow resistance, Thomas ordered a general retreat. They fled up the river, followed by Carleton with more than a thousand troops, and six field-pieces. He captured the artillery and stores of the Americans, two tons of powder in a batteau, about one hundred of their effective men, and nearly all of the sick. Many of the latter crawled from the camp hospital, and took refuge in the woods and among the neighboring peasantry. The remainder of the broken army, leaving baggage and all else behind, escaped to Point Deschambault, about sixty miles above Quebec, where the fugitives were reassembled on the eighth. There General Thomas called a council of war, and it was resolved to send forward the invalids in camp, and make a stand at that place, with five hundred men, if supplies of provisions and of reinforcements could be received from Montreal. But these could not be furnished; so, after halting a few days, and ascertaining that the enemy's ships were ascending the St. Lawrence, the miserable remnant of the invading army, sick and dispirited, crossed the river to the mouth of the Sorel, and soon sought shelter at Chamblée and St. John.

The sick, wounded, and captive prisoners, were all treated with great humanity by the generous Carleton, who, on the tenth of May, issued the following noble proclamation:—

"Whereas, I am informed that many of his majesty's deluded subjects of the neighboring provinces, laboring under wounds and divers disorders, are dispersed in the adjacent woods and parishes, and in great danger of perishing for want of proper assistance; all captains and other officers of militia are hereby commanded to make diligent search for all such distressed persons, and afford them all necessary relief, and convey them to the general hospital, where proper care shall be taken of them: all reasonable expenses which may be incurred in complying with this order shall be repaid by the receiver-general. And, lest a consciousness of past offences should deter miserable wretches from receiving that assistance which their distressed situation may require, I hereby make known to them, that, as soon as their health is restored, they shall have free liberty to return to their respective provinces."

Intelligence of these disasters, communicated to General Schuyler by the commissioners of Congress, then in Montreal, greatly distressed him, because they were bitter denials of hopeful expectations. For many months that sterling patriot had contended with a world of difficulties, public and private, and had exerted the most untiring efforts, even while prostrated by sickness, to keep the army in Canada supplied with men, provisions, and munitions of war. The disappointment was great, and in a letter to Washington, in which the sad intelligence of the disasters was conveyed, he expressed his belief that the Americans would be compelled to abandon Canada. But Washington, ever hopeful under the most gloomy circumstances, sent back cheering words. He confessed that he was not without his fears, and was fully sensible that the unfortunate events had greatly deranged all schemes of conquest in the north, yet he remarked: "We must not despair. A manly and spirited opposition only can insure success, and prevent the enemy from improving the advantage they have obtained."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TORIES IN THE INTERIOR OF NEW YORK — THE JOHNSON FAMILY — SCHUYLER'S PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THEM — SIR JOHN JOHNSON PAROLED AND HIS FOLLOWERS DISARMED — HIS PERFIDY — EXPEDITION AGAINST HIM — ESCAPE TO CANADA — SAILING OF THE CONTINENTAL FLEET FROM PHILADELPHIA — NAVAL OPERATIONS UNDER COMMODORE HOPKINS — HOPKINS CENSURED BY CONGRESS AND DISMISSED FROM THE SERVICE — DUNMORE ON THE VIRGINIA COAST — HIS EXPULSION — MOVEMENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA — ABDICATION OF GOVERNOR MARTIN — RISING OF THE HIGHLANDERS — FLORA M'DONALD — BATTLE AT MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE — DEFEAT OF THE LOYALISTS — ITS EFFECTS.

While severe disasters were marking the operations of the republican army in Canada, and dark clouds were gathering like the precursors of a furious tempest in the northern sky, events in the interior of New York excited the most lively apprehensions of impending danger, and demanded the exercise of General Schuyler's utmost vigilance, judgment, and sagacity. During the summer of 1775, the Johnsons had been very busy in winning the Six Nations from their position of neutrality, which they had promised General Schuyler, at a conference held the previous winter, they would maintain in the quarrel between Great Britain and the colonists; and toward the close of the year it was evident that they had been successful. Colonel Guy Johnson, the Indian agent, had moved with his family to Oswego, on Lake Ontario, and there he had held a grand council with the fierce Seneca and Cayuga Indians; while Sir John Johnson, who held the commission of brigadier-general of the militia of Tryon county, remained at Johnson hall, which he had fortified, surrounded by a large number of armed Scotch Highlanders, who were devoted to his interests, and were loyal to a man. These movements, and the increasing alienation of the Indians, even in the lower valley of the Mohawk; the rumor that

Guy Johnson was collecting a large body of savages on the remote frontier, and that arms and ammunition were concealed in Tryon county, for the purpose of spreading death and desolation from Fort Stanwix to Schenectady, caused the continental Congress, in December, to direct General Schuyler to take such measures as he should think proper to secure the military stores, apprehend tory leaders, and disarm the loyal inhabitants in that quarter.

General Schuyler had no troops at his command at Albany, but, aided by the Albany committee of safety, he mustered seven hundred men, and proceeded to Schenectady, where, after a brief conference with the friendly Mohawks of the lower castle, he pushed forward to Guy Park, the residence of Colonel Johnson, near the site of the present village of Amsterdam. He then sent a letter to Sir John Johnson, inviting him to a personal interview. They met at Guy Park in a friendly way, and Schuyler made humane proposals to settle the matter without bloodshed. He demanded the immediate surrender of all arms, ammunition, and stores, in the possession of Johnson, the delivery to him of all the arms and military accoutrements held by the tories and Indians, and Sir John's parole of honor not to act inimically to the patriot cause. The perplexed and alarmed baronet asked twenty-four hours for consideration. It was granted, but his reply was so unsatisfactory that Schuyler marched on to Caughnawaga, within four miles of Johnson hall, his force continually increasing, for the Dutch and Germans in all parts of that region were ardent whigs. When he halted, his little army of seven hundred had increased to full three thousand. Sir John perceived that resistance would be useless, and he acceded to all the terms proposed. Schuyler then marched to Johnson hall, where, on the twentieth of January, 1776, everything named in the capitulation was surrendered, and three hundred Scotchmen delivered up their arms. Leaving Colonel Herkimer to complete the disarming of the tories in the Mohawk valley, Schuyler and his forces marched back to Albany.

Sir John's parole allowed him to go as far westward, in Tryon county, as the German Flats and Kingsland districts, and to every

part of the colony to the southward and eastward of these districts, provided he did not go into any seaport town. When making the surrender, Sir John intimated a desire that he and the gentlemen with him should be permitted to retain such arms as were their own property. Schuyler, with his characteristic politeness, replied, that his feelings as a gentleman induced him to "consent that Sir John Johnson may retain the few favorite family arms, he making a list of them; General Schuyler never refusing a gentleman his side-arms." The rest of the "gentlemen," being Johnson's tory tenants, were not allowed the same indulgence. Congress highly approved of the general's "fidelity, prudence, and despatch," and "proper temper toward that deluded people:"* and Washington, in a letter to him on the twenty-seventh of January, said: "I congratulate you upon the success of your expedition into Tryon county. I hope General Lee will execute a work of the same kind on Long Island. It is high time to begin with our internal foes, when we are threatened with such severity of chastisement from our kind parent without."

Colonel Guy Johnson, meanwhile, accompanied by a large number of chiefs and warriors of the Six Nations, among whom was Joseph Brant, the great Mohawk leader and the colonel's secretary,† had departed for Canada. He descended the St. Lawrence to Montreal, where he met Sir Guy Carleton and Sir Frederick Haldimand, with whom the Indians entered into a formal agreement to take up arms for the king.

* Journals of Congress, February 5, 1776.

† Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea) was one of the most renowned warriors of the Six Nations. He was a Mohawk of pure native blood, and was born on the banks of the Ohio, in 1742. He was sent by Sir William Johnson to Doctor Wheelock's school, in Connecticut, where he received a good education, and was prepared for the ministry among his own people. Sir William afterward employed him as his secretary and agent in business with the Indians. His pursuits were secular; and under the influence of the Johnsons, he took sides with the crown when the Revolution broke out. Soon after going to Canada, in 1775, he sailed for England with Colonel Guy Johnson, where he attracted great attention. He was engaged in predatory warfare in New York and on the borders of Pennsylvania, throughout the Revolution, and held a colonel's commission from the king. He visited England in 1783, in behalf of his people, who were settled on the Grand river, in Canada. He translated a part of the New Testament into the Mohawk language, and labored much for the spiritual and temporal welfare of his ruined nation. There he died on the twenty-fourth of November, 1807, at the age of sixty-five years. One of his sons was a British officer on the Niagara frontier in the war of 1812.

Sir John Johnson soon violated his parole, and the Highlanders began to be as bold in their denunciations of, and as insulting toward the republicans, as ever. Their chief's conduct at length became so suspicious, that the Congress, on information from General Schuyler, directed that officer to cause his arrest, and to pursue rigorous measures against the tories. Toward the middle of May, Schuyler despatched Colonel Dayton, with a sufficient force, to Johnson hall, to capture the baronet; but his friends in Albany had given him timely warning, and before the arrival of Dayton, he had concealed some of his most valuable property in an iron chest, in his garden, and hastily collecting a large number of his Scotch tenantry and other tories, fled to the forests in the direction of Canada.* He was met in the wilderness by a body of Indians under Brant, who escorted him and his followers to Montreal, after wandering between the headwaters of the Hudson and the banks of the St. Lawrence, in the midst of great perils and sufferings, for nineteen days. Sir John was immediately commissioned a colonel in the British service, raised two battalions of loyalists, called the "Johnson Greens," and became one of the most implacable enemies of the Americans during the war.

While disasters were pressing with crushing force upon the republican cause in the extreme north, and every breeze from the St. Lawrence bore chilling tidings to the hearts of Washington and his compatriots in the army and in the senate, events on the ocean and upon the seaboard of Virginia and the Carolinas were displaying cheerful and hopeful tokens, though clouded by many anxious forebodings of evil.

The warm weather in January that had opened the ice-bars of Boston harbor, had also released the little fleet of the republicans,

* Lady Johnson was conveyed to Albany, and there kept some time, as a sort of hostage for the good conduct of her husband. Colonel Dayton bore a letter from General Schuyler to Sir John, giving him reasons for ordering his arrest, and assuring him that no insult should be offered to him or his family, and that his property should be "guarded and secured with a scrupulous attention;" adding: "For, sir, American commanders engaged in the cause of liberty, remain uninfluenced by the savage and brutal example which has been given them by the British troops, in wantonly setting on fire the *buildings of individuals*, and otherwise destroying their property."—Schuyler's Letter Books.

at Philadelphia, which, for several weeks, had been tethered by frost, while under orders from the Congress "to annoy the enemy's ships upon the coasts of the southern states," where the people were then suffering from the cruelties of the implacable Lord Dunmore, and alarmed by the menaces of Governor Martin. At length the ice in the Delaware was broken up, and on the seventeenth of February, the veteran ship-master, Commodore Esek Hopkins (the naval commander-in-chief) sailed in the *Alfred*, accompanied by another ship, two brigs, and a sloop, to be joined off the capes of Virginia by two Maryland vessels, under Captain John Barry, of Baltimore.* These vessels were all well armed and well manned; and in addition to the crews, they bore full two hundred marines. At the mizen-peak of the *Alfred* the union flag of thirteen stripes was unfurled, having been placed there a few weeks before by the hand of her first lieutenant, the intrepid John Paul Jones. That was the first ensign ever displayed by an American man-of-war. At about the same time, Captain Barry sailed from Baltimore, in the armed brig *Lexington*, and early in April, while off the capes of Virginia, he captured a tender to the *Liverpool* man-of-war.

Lord Dunmore was yet in the Elizabeth river with his fleet; and in the Cape Fear river the British sloops-of-war *Falcon*, *Scorpion*, and *Cruiser*, lay at anchor, to awe the inhabitants. Hopkins, contrary to orders, proceeded with his little squadron toward the Bahama islands. He reached New Providence on the first of March, and on the following day he landed his marines, under Captain Nichols, for the purpose of seizing a large quantity of ammunition and stores at Nassau, belonging to the king. They took possession of the town, captured Governor Brown and a few others, and secured a large quantity of stores as the spoils of victory. The powder had been sent away by the governor, and was spared from the grasp of the invaders.

With his captives and booty, Hopkins sailed for the New England

* The squadron consisted of the *Alfred*, twenty-eight guns, Commodore Hopkins; the *Columbus*, twenty-eight guns, Captain Abraham Whipple, who assisted in the destruction of the *Gaspé*, in 1772; the *Andrea Doria*, fourteen guns, Captain Nicholas Biddle; *Sebastian Cabot*, sixteen guns, Captain John B. Hopkins; and the *Providence*, twelve guns, Captain Hazard.

coasts, and while off the east end of Long Island, on the fourth and fifth of April, he fell in with two small British vessels, captured them, and took forty-eight men prisoners. The spoils were heavy guns, powder, and stores. At one o'clock on the morning of the sixth, Hopkins's squadron fell in with the *Glasgow*, a British ship carrying heavy twenty-nine pounders, and one hundred and fifty men, commanded by Captain Tyringham Howe. An irregular action was kept up until daylight, when Howe, perceiving the number of American vessels, crowded sail and fled toward Newport, to meet the little fleet under Wallace. Hopkins, with his prizes, went into New London, having lost twenty-three men in killed and wounded. The public mind was dissatisfied with the results of his operations; and in August following, the Congress censured him because of his disobedience of orders. Several months afterward, on account of charges preferred against him by several naval officers, he was dismissed from the service. Captain Whipple was tried for not aiding the *Alfred* in the affair of the *Glasgow*, and was acquitted; but Hazard, of the *Providence*, for some cause not recorded, was cashiered, and his vessel was placed under the command of Lieutenant John Paul Jones.

Lord Dunmore, meanwhile, had kept himself in safety, in the Elizabeth river, but his movements there compelled the Virginians to exercise the most active vigilance. The republican troops, under Colonel Stevens, had remained at Norfolk until in February, when, having removed the families, and appraised the dwellings which remained, he caused the latter to be destroyed, that the enemy might have no shelter. Thus the most flourishing town in Virginia was made an utter desolation, and when the Americans abandoned it the fugitive governor erected temporary barracks there. But he could not obtain supplies from the neighboring country; so, early in May, he destroyed them, manœuvred awhile in Hampton roads, and finally landed upon the beautiful Gwyn's island, near the mouth of the Piankitank river, then a fertile spot of about two thousand acres. There he cast up intrenchments and built a stockade, with the evident intention of making it his place of rendezvous for his

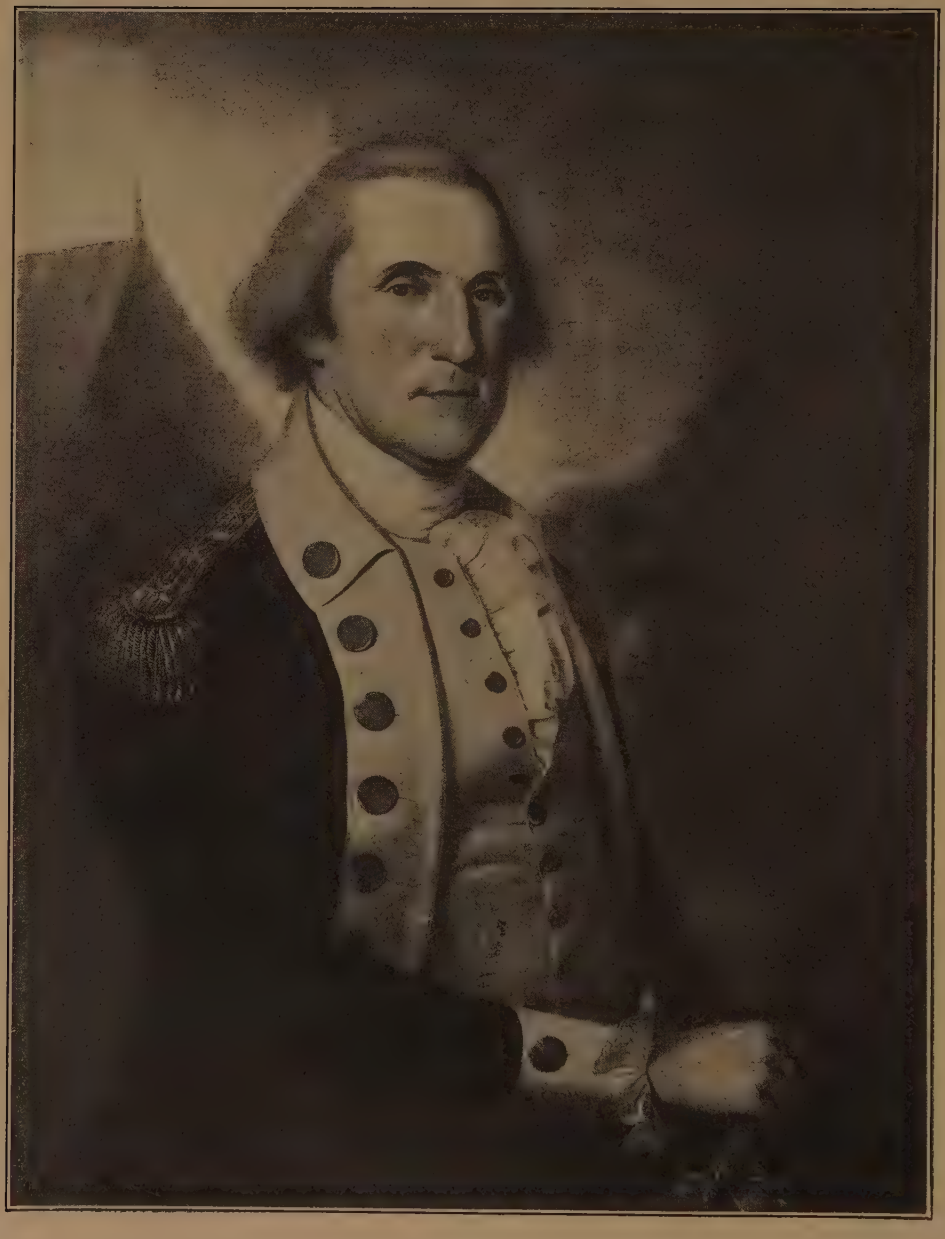
motley horde of five hundred white men and negroes, while plundering and ravaging the plantations in the neighborhood.

Dunmore remained at Gwyn's island until early in July, when he was driven away by a Virginia brigade under General Andrew Lewis. He fled, with his marauders, to his vessels. Some of the latter that were aground he burned, and with the remainder of his fleet, he entered the Potomac and plundered and desolated several plantations upon its borders. He went as high as Occoquan creek, and burned the mills there. No doubt it was his design to lay waste the fine estate of Mount Vernon, a short distance above, and attempt the capture of Mrs. Washington; but a heavy storm arose, and this, in connection with the activity of the militia of Prince William county, who gathered to oppose him, compelled him to flee to his ships and descend the river. On returning to Lynn Haven bay, he sent some of his vessels to St. Augustine, some to the Bermudas, and some to the West Indies, with about a thousand slaves that he had kidnapped from the Virginia plantations. These were sold for his private benefit. He then sailed for New York, and remained in the British fleet there until autumn, when he departed for England, never more to return to America. The name of Dunmore, as it appears in our history, is associated with all that marks the bad man—avaricious, selfish, heartless, cruel, and revengeful. He was the second royal governor who had been utterly cast out for ever by the republicans.†

Still farther south the kindling fires of the Revolution were seen, and the din of arms had been heard. At the opening of 1776, the

* Andrew Lewis was a native of Augusta county, in Virginia. With five brothers, he was in the battle when Braddock was defeated, and continued active during the war. He was a major in Washington's Virginia regiment, and was highly esteemed by him for his courage and skill. He was the commander, as already noticed on page 472, volume i., at the battle of Point Pleasant, in 1774. When Washington was appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental army, he recommended Lewis as one of the major-generals, but he was overlooked. He accepted the office of a brigadier-general in March, 1776, and commanded a detachment of the army stationed near Williamsburg. He resigned his command on account of illness in 1780, and died in Bedford county, forty miles from his home on the Roanoke, while on his way thither. General Lewis was more than six feet in height, and possessed great personal dignity.

† Two years after his return to Europe, Lord Dunmore was appointed governor of the Bermudas. He did not long remain there, for he was very unpopular. He died in England in the year 1809. His wife was Lady Charlotte Stewart, daughter of the earl of Gallowav.



Washington at the Period when He was in Command of the Revolutionary Army

From the painting by James Peale, now in the Lenox Gallery, New York

At the period of the greatest anxiety, when after the winter of suffering and privation endured by the patriot army at Valley Forge, the prospect of success loomed; when General Howe was indulging his officers with frivolous gaieties at Philadelphia, and the Federal commander was planning how he should meet the British force with his less than eleven thousand, half-clothed, half-starved troops, Washington sat for his portrait to James Peale, in which the traces of his deep cares are strongly manifested beneath the calm earnestness that dominates.

province of North Carolina was alive with excitement, for the royal governor and the people were engaged in an open quarrel, that became warmer and more belligerent every day, and at length resulted in blows. Ever since the "Regulator war" in western Carolina, in 1771, already alluded to,* which grew out of the extortions and misrule of Governor Tryon and his associates, the province had been in a ferment, hatred of royal rule having grown apace, and permeated the great body of the people.

In the provincial convention held at New Berne, in August, 1774, to choose delegates to represent North Carolina in the continental Congress, the spirit of opposition appeared strong and defiant. And in April, 1775, a provincial convention of republicans was called at New Berne, on the same day that Governor Martin had appointed for the legislature of the province to assemble. These bodies, distinct in the method of their construction, were composed chiefly of the same men, and of course their proceedings in relation to the great and absorbing topic that occupied all minds, would necessarily be coincident. The governor was alarmed and perplexed, and in vain attempted to keep the two organizations distinct. He besought the authorized assembly to discountenance the irregular convention, whose deputies had been just elected by the people in an illegal manner; and he denounced the proceedings of the continental Congress as "highly offensive to his majesty," and urged the people to remember their allegiance to their sovereign. But the representatives of the people laughed at his impotence, and his words were powerless, because they were in conflict with the ruling sentiment of the province. Both assemblies expressed their approbation of the character and conduct of the first continental Congress, and appointed delegates to represent the province in the second. Finding the legal assembly intractable, the governor dissolved them; and from that time the representatives of royalty and of the people were fairly at issue, and became no more reconciled.

The insurrectionary movement became so menacing, that the

* See page 371, vol. i.

governor placed cannon in front of his palace at New Berne; and he sent messengers to the loyal Scotch settlers at Cross creek (now Fayetteville), to call them to arms. He also sent trusty men into the western counties, to offer in his name free pardon for past offences, to all regulators who should join the royal cause. At about the same time, a letter from the governor to General Gage, soliciting a supply of arms and ammunition, was intercepted; also a letter from Alexander Cameron, of the Cross creek settlement, to Gage, assuring him that there would be no difficulty in securing the services of the Cherokees in the event of hostilities, fell into the hands of the republicans.

These things greatly exasperated the people; and under the direction of the committee of safety at New Berne, the patriots in that vicinity assembled and carried off the six cannon in front of the governor's palace. Martin became thoroughly alarmed, for notes of hostile preparations in every quarter fell upon his ear. Like Dunmore he dared no longer trust the clemency of an outraged people, and at the middle of June, scarcely a week after the royal representative in Virginia had escaped to a vessel-of-war for safety, Governor Martin fled to Fort Johnston, on the Cape Fear river, near Wilmington. From that retreat he sent forth a menacing proclamation, so offensive to the patriots, that the committee of safety at Wilmington publicly declared the governor to be, "an instrument in the hands of administration to rivet those chains so wickedly forged for America." This appellation was well bestowed, for it was soon ascertained that he was undoubtedly an accessory in inciting a servile insurrection on the Tar river, promising freedom to the slaves who should destroy their masters. This, as we have already seen, was a part of the programme of operations against the revolted colonies prepared by the ministry; and it was justified by a no less intellectual authority than the eminent Doctor Johnson, who, in his pamphlet entitled "Taxation no Tyranny,"* then

* This pamphlet, Boswell tells us, was written at the desire of the ministry, and it was revised and curtailed by some of them. Johnson was charged by the opposition, with having been bribed to perform the task, but a remark of Boswell indicates that its sentiments were really his own, and that he wrote it as a gratuitous word in favor of ministerial measures. One of the passages struck

lately published, said: "The slaves should be set free; an act which the lovers of liberty must surely commend. If they are furnished with arms for defence, and utensils of husbandry, and settled in some simple form of government, within the country, they may be more honest and grateful than their masters."

The suspicion that Governor Martin was favorable to a servile insurrection, filled the cup of the people's indignation to the brim, and five hundred militia-men, led by Colonel John Ashe, marched upon Fort Johnston, to destroy it before it should be made a stronghold of royal power. The governor fled on board the British sloop-of-war *Cruiser*, lying in the Cape Fear river; and before night a greater portion of the fort was demolished. The fugitive magistrate was then declared, by the Wilmington committee of safety, to be an enemy to his country and the province, and all persons were forbidden to hold any communication with him. The whole province was now in a state of revolt, except the Scotch settlements, for the western counties were ready to take up arms responsive to the movements in the eastern and middle districts; and in Mecklenburg, the people, by a series of resolutions, had virtually declared themselves independent of the British crown.

Governor Martin kept the ministry and Generals Gage and Howe continually informed respecting public movements in his province; and he always expressed a belief, that firm loyalty like that of the Highlanders, would be manifested by many natives of the colony, if a competent land and naval force should appear upon the coast to give them assurance of protection against the infatuated republicans. It was for this purpose that Howe fitted out the expedition under Sir Henry Clinton, at the close of 1775; and for the same purpose, the troops under Cornwallis were despatched to that coast, in Sir Peter Parker's fleet, early in 1776. In expectation of the

out by the revisers of Johnson's pamphlet, and copied by Boswell from a few proof leaves in his possession, was remarkable. "Their numbers are," he said, "at present, not quite sufficient for the greatness which, in some form of government or other, is to rival ancient monarchies; but by Doctor Franklin's rule of progression, they will, in a century and a quarter, be more than equal to the inhabitants of Europe. When the whigs of America are thus multiplied, let the princes of the earth tremble in their palaces.... But let not our boldest oppugners of authority look forward with delight to this futurity of whiggism."

arrival of these forces, Governor Martin prepared to raise the royal standard, and invite and command the loyal inhabitants to rally around it.

On the tenth of January, 1776, the governor sent forth a proclamation from the armed sloop *Scorpion*, in the Cape Fear river, which was now his home and refuge, in which he denounced the "horrid, daring, and unnatural rebellion;" declared his determination to erect the royal standard and collect the friends of the king under it; promised "forgiveness of all past offences," even of those who had taken up arms; and commanded every true friend of his country to rally on the side of the crown and of good government. At the same time, he sent military commissions to several of the leading Highlanders at Cross Creek, and tories of other places in the province, authorizing them to "erect the king's standard, levy, muster, and array in arms all his majesty's loyal and faithful subjects within their respective counties, into companies of fifty men each." This proclamation was sent through a continuous chain of counties from the seaboard to the mountains; and, strange as it may appear, many of the regulators who had been in arms against the colonial government only four years before, were now found to be in union with the Highlanders and other loyalists.* For several months secret emissaries had been busy throughout the province, perfecting this union, and had well succeeded.

Although Allan M'Donald, the husband of Flora (that noble and beautiful woman so celebrated in song and story, as the deliverer of Charles Edward, the young Scotch pretender to the throne of England, after the defeat of his troops at Culloden†), was first

* They had a plausible excuse for this seeming inconsistency. Governor Tryon, with the heel of military power fairly upon their necks, had wrung from them a solemn oath of allegiance. They were conscientious, and held such a vow in deep reverence; and nothing could make them swerve from their loyalty to conscience. Hundreds, when the war of the Revolution had fairly commenced, whose sympathies were with the patriots, felt bound by their oath to Tryon to remain passive; and when commanded to take up arms, they dared not disobey. They held that oath too sacred to be violated, even when it was evident that the king could no longer protect them. Their friends and neighbors on the other side of the Yadkin, where Tryon's oath was not administered, were among the earliest who cast off allegiance to the British crown.

† The "Young Pretender" was a grandson of James the Second; and in the year 1745, in imitation of his father many years before, he attempted, by gathering to his standard his loyal countrymen, to recover the throne of England for his own house of Stuart. His forces were defeated by

named in the commission, he took a subordinate place in the military organization that ensued. There was another of his clan, lately come to Cross Creek from the British camp in Boston, who received from Governor Martin the commission of a brigadier, and became commander-in-chief of the Highlanders, with Alexander M'Leod, another new-comer, as his lieutenant. That chief was Donald M'Donald, a brave old veteran who had fought well for his

the English at Culloden, and Charles Edward became a fugitive. While among the Highlands of Scotland he was discovered by his enemies, and fled in an open boat to South Uist, an island on the west coast, where he found refuge with Laird M'Donald. His pursuers discovered his retreat, and three thousand English soldiers were sent to search every nook and dell, crag and cottage upon the island. A cordon of armed vessels surrounded South Uist, so that escape appeared impossible. But escape from the island was necessary for the safety of the prince. Lady M'Donald proposed that he should put on the garb of a servant-woman, and in company with a lady as waiting-maid, leave the island. Who had the courage? Flora M'Donald, from Millburg, a beautiful girl just from school at Edinburgh, was there on a visit. Her step-father was then on the island, in command of a corps of soldiers searching for the prince. Regardless of the certain displeasure of her father and the extreme peril of the undertaking, Flora acceded to the proposal of Lady M'Donald to save the prince, and that very night, in company with a trusty officer, she went among the crags of Carradale, to the cave where the royal fugitive was concealed. Great was the astonishment and delight of the prince when he was informed of the plan for his escape. Within a day or two, Flora procured a passport from her unsuspecting step-father for herself, a young companion, a boat's crew, and Betsey Bourke, an Irish woman, whom Flora pretended she had procured as a spinster for her mother. The prince, attired as Betsey Bourke, embarked with Flora and her companions, on the twenty-eighth of June, 1746, for the Isle of Skye. A furious tempest tossed them about all night, and a band of soldiers prevented their landing in the morning. They finally landed near the residence of Sir Alexander M'Donald, where the prince was concealed in the cavity of a rock, for the laird was his enemy, and his hall was filled with soldiers seeking the fugitive. Flora touched the heart of Lady M'Donald, and by her aid the prince and the maiden made a safe journey of twelve miles, on foot, to Portree. There they parted for ever, the prince to escape to France, Flora to be soon afterward carried a prisoner to London and cast into the Tower. The story of her adventure excited the admiration of all classes, and as she was not a partisan of the Pretender, nor of his religious faith, the nobility interfered in her behalf. Prince Frederick, the father of George the Third, visited her in prison, and so much was he interested in her that he procured her release. While she remained in London, her residence was surrounded by the carriages of the nobility; and Lady Primrose, a friend of the Pretender, introduced her to court society. When presented to the old king George the Second, he said to her, "How could you dare to succor the enemy of my crown and kingdom?" Flora replied with great simplicity, "It was no more than I would have done for your majesty, had you been in like situation." A chaise and four were fitted up for her return to Scotland, and her escort was Malcolm M'Leod, who often said afterward, "I went to London to be hanged, but rode back in a chaise and four with Flora M'Donald." Four years afterward she married Allan, the son of the Laird M'Donald, and became mistress of the mansion where the prince passed his first night in the Isle of Skye. In 1775, Flora and her husband, with several children, arrived among their countrymen in North Carolina. Full of loyalty, she encouraged her friends to rally in defence of the royal cause. After suffering much, she and her family embarked in a sloop-of-war for Scotland. On the voyage the vessel was attacked by a French cruiser, and the brave Flora, who was on deck during the action, was severely wounded in the hand. They reached their country, where Flora lived until the fifth of March, 1790. She was buried in the cemetery of Kilmuir, in the Isle of Skye. Her shroud was the sheet in which the prince slept while under her guidance; and three thousand persons stood and wept as her coffin was let down into the grave.—Lossing's "Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution," ii, 377, second edition.

young prince on the fatal field of Culloden; and now, with his countrymen, was ready to show equal loyalty to the house of Hanover, with the hope, no doubt, of wiping out the stain of rebellion that had tarnished their names since the events of '45.

M'Donald set up the royal ensign at Cross Creek on the first of February, and sent out Governor Martin's proclamation with his own, calling the Highlanders to his flag. In a few days, more than a thousand loyal-hearted Scotchmen (many of them not fully comprehending the nature of the quarrel, and obeying blindly), and a body of timid regulators, full fifteen hundred in all, were gathered around the standard of the Highland chief.

Governor Martin expected auxiliary forces from abroad, to arrive in the Cape Fear river early in February, and he ordered the loyalists in arms to assemble at Brunswick on the seventeenth of that month. Dunmore was then operating in Lower Virginia, and Colonel Robert Howe, of Brunswick, with many North-Carolinians, were there to oppose him. Sir Henry Clinton was on his way from New York, with several vessels and four companies of troops; Lord William Campbell, governor of South Carolina, was expected from Charleston, with some followers; and at the same time, Sir Peter Parker, with a large force under Cornwallis, was confidently looked for. Martin, conceived that "the train was laid," and that he "had merely to apply the match and kindle a civil, savage, and servile war, from Virginia to South Carolina, from the Atlantic to the Alleghanies."* But the republicans were vigilant and active; and as soon as Colonel James Moore, of Hanover, was apprized of the gathering of the loyalists to the banner of M'Donald, he marched with his regulars, and a detachment of Hanover militia, eleven hundred strong, toward Cross Creek, and encamped about twelve miles south of the headquarters of the Highlanders. There he formed a fortified camp, and by scouting parties he cut off all communication between Governor Martin and General M'Donald. The latter immediately moved forward to attack the republicans, but

* Address of the Honorable David L. Swain before the Historical Society of the University of North Carolina, April 1, 1853.

when within four miles of Moore's camp, intelligence respecting the strength and discipline of his foes, caused him to halt and open a communication with their leader. He sent a flag to Moore with a letter, exhorting him to save bloodshed by joining the royal standard, and threatening him with the treatment due to rebels caught in arms, if he should refuse. But entreaties and menaces were alike powerless upon Moore, and after sending an express to Colonel Caswell, he informed M'Donald that he could not be seduced from the holy cause in which he was engaged. He also exhorted the Scotch leader to prevent bloodshed by signing the test-act proposed by the provincial Congress of North Carolina, and threatened him with severe punishment in the event of his refusal.

M'Donald was not in a condition to put his threats into execution, for he was informed that the minute-men were gathering in swarms around him. He, therefore, resolved to avoid an engagement, and make an attempt to join the garrison and his friends at Wilmington, with his whole force. He accordingly decamped at midnight, crossed the Cape Fear, and pushed on at a rapid pace, over swollen streams, rough hills, and deep morasses, hotly pursued by Colonel Moore. He crossed the South river (one of the principal tributaries of the Cape Fear), from Bladen into Hanover, on the third day of his march, and as he approached Moore's creek, a small tributary of that stream, he discovered the gleaming of fire-arms. These were in the camp of Colonels Caswell* and Lillington†, near

* Richard Caswell was born in Maryland, in 1729. He went to North Carolina in 1746, bearing letters to Governor Johnston from the governor of Maryland. He became deputy-surveyor of the colony, and in 1753, was clerk of the county court of Orange. He was a member of the colonial assembly from 1754 to 1771, and was, for two years, speaker of the house of commons. He was a militia colonel under Tryon at the Allamance; and he was one of the delegates from North Carolina in the first continental Congress. In November, 1775, he was president of the provincial Congress of that state which framed a constitution, and he was elected the first governor under it. From that time until the close of the war he was very active in civil and military life. In 1784, he was again elected governor; and in 1789, he was chosen state senator, and on the fifth of November of that year, while presiding in the senate, he was prostrated by paralysis. He died on the tenth.

† John Alexander Lillington was the son of a British military officer, of Barbadoes, and was born on that island. He emigrated to North Carolina about the year 1734, and built a fine house, known as *Lillington hall*, in the wilderness. He early espoused the cause of freedom, and was one of the first members of the Wilmington committee of safety. Soon after the battle at Moore's creek, in which Colonel Lillington was the chief commander, he was promoted to brigadier; and he remained in service until the close of the war. He was a man of herculean frame and strength, possessed of high intellectual powers, and incorruptible integrity.

the mouth of the creek, who, with the minute-men of four neighboring counties, and battalions from Wilmington and New Berne, in all about a thousand strong, were out in search of the loyalist army.

M'Donald, who had been suffering with a fever for several days, was now very ill, and the situation of his troops was extremely perilous, for the strong minute-men of the Neuse region, bearing upon their caps or on their breasts the stirring words of Patrick Henry—"Liberty or Death"—were in front, and Colonel Moore and his regulars were close upon their rear. Flight was impossible, and a conflict was the only alternative.

The belligerent troops passed the night of the twenty-sixth of February within sight of each other, on opposite sides of the stream. During the night the republicans cast up a breastwork, removed the planks from the bridge across Moore's creek, and disposed their forces so as to command the passage and the roads on each side. At early dawn bagpipes were heard, and a bugle-blast called the loyalists to arms. The republicans were prepared to meet them. The Highlanders, led by M'Leod (for M'Donald was too ill to leave his tent), rushed forward to the attack. Perceiving no one at the breastwork, they concluded that the republicans had abandoned it; but when they were within twenty paces of the embankments, a column of strong-armed men arose from behind them, and poured a deadly fire upon the advancing foe. For ten minutes the battle was fierce and bloody. M'Leod was killed at the beginning. Captain John Campbell, the next in command, soon fell, mortally wounded; and at that moment, a party of militia, under Lieutenant Slocum,* who had forded the creek and penetrated a swamp on its

* Mrs. Ellett, in her "Women of the Revolution," relates a noble instance of female heroism which this battle developed. The wife of Lieutenant Slocum, whose home was sixty miles distant from the scene of conflict, had dreamed, after her husband and his neighbors had departed with Caswell, that she saw him lying dead upon the ground. She awoke in great distress, arose, saddled a horse, and rode at full gallop in the direction the troops had taken. Through the thinly-settled and swampy country she pressed on, and at nine o'clock in the morning she heard the firing. As she came near the battle-ground, she saw a body lying in her husband's cloak, but it proved to be another man, who was wounded. She alighted, washed his face, bound up his wounds, and was administering comfort to another wounded man, when Caswell and her astonished husband came up. With true womanly feeling, she interceded for the life of the prisoner, attended to the wounded

western bank, fell suddenly upon the rear of the loyalists. The loss of their leaders and this unexpected attack, produced a panic among the Scotchmen. They broke and fled in great confusion; and eight hundred and fifty soldiers, with General M'Donald, were made prisoners-of-war. Among these was the husband of Flora M'Donald, who bore a captain's commission, and with his son, fought bravely. The victory was complete; the dispersion of the loyalists, total and lasting. They had lost seventy men in killed and wounded, while the patriots had only two men wounded, and one of these survived. Colonel Moore arrived soon after the battle had closed, encamped upon the field of conflict, and, as commander-in-chief, took charge of the spoils of victory. These consisted of fifteen hundred rifles; three hundred and fifty muskets; one hundred swords and dirks; two medicine chests of great value; thirteen wagons, with complete sets of harness, and a box of gold coin, containing about seventy-five thousand dollars.

This was the first battle of the Revolution below the Roanoke; and the effect of this defeat of the loyalists was of vast importance to the republican cause throughout the country, and especially in North Carolina, upon whose loyalty ministers had counted largely. The skill and courage of the defenders of liberty were proudly exhibited, and the spirit of the loyalists was crushed. The general organization of the tories, to act in conjunction with the expected British forces, was prevented, and thus the strong right arm of royal power in the South, upon which so much dependence had been anticipated, was suddenly paralyzed. The kindness extended to the prisoners and their families won the esteem of all; and the clemency of the republicans toward the loyalists converted many of the latter to the faith of those who longed for independence and freedom. "We have," said the provincial Congress of North Carolina, a few weeks later, when referring to the loyalists—"we have

loyalists through the day, and at midnight started for home. She did not tell her husband of her dream until his return. She rode one hundred and twenty-five miles in less than forty hours, and without one interval of rest! A mother's love, for she "wanted to see her child," impelled her to return with speed. The Carolinas were full of such heroic women as Mary Slocum when the storm of the Revolution swept over them.

their security in contemplation, not to make them miserable. In our power, their errors claim our pity; their situation disarms our resentment. We shall hail their reformation with increasing pleasure, and receive them among us with open arms.... We war not with helpless females whom they have left behind; we sympathize in their sorrow, and wish to pour the balm of pity into the wounds which a separation from husbands, fathers, and the dearest relations, has made. They are the rightful pensioners upon the charity and bounty of those who have aught to spare from their own necessities for the relief of their indigent fellow-creatures; to such we commend them."

The republicans diligently improved the advantages secured by this victory by strengthening their civil power, and in making preparations for future issues. Utterly discouraged because all of his designs were frustrated, Governor Martin abdicated government, and took refuge on board the flag-ship of Sir Peter Parker, on his arrival in the Cape Fear in May, and then royal power was fairly at an end in North Carolina. Martin was the last magistrate appointed by the crown who ruled in that colony.*

* Josiah Martin was a soldier by profession, and was a north Briton. He had risen to the rank of major, in the British army, in 1770, and in 1771, he succeeded Tryon as governor of North Carolina. He was urbane in manners, and a sincere well-wisher of the colony, but he was compelled to obey the will of his superiors, and became practically a tyrant. He went to New York with Sir Henry Clinton, in the summer, and afterward joined the army under Cornwallis. He was with him in North Carolina as late as the spring of 1781, when ill health caused him to leave. He spent a part of that summer on Long Island, near New York and then sailed for England. He died in London, in 1786

CHAPTER IX.

FOREIGN INTEREST IN THE REVOLUTION — SENTIMENTS OF FRANCE AND HOLLAND — FALLACY OF KING GEORGE'S ASSURANCES — ACTION OF FOREIGN POWERS — FRENCH EMISSARY IN PHILADELPHIA — SECRET COMMITTEE FOR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE APPOINTED — DUMAS AT THE HAGUE — SILAS DEANE SENT TO FRANCE — HIS LACK OF PRUDENCE AND WISDOM — AFFAIRS IN NEW YORK — REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS THERE — FLIGHT OF GOVERNOR TRYON — TIMID ACTION OF THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS — GENERAL LEE'S ENERGETIC MEASURES — SUPPLIES FOR THE FLEET CUT OFF — TREATMENT OF TORIES — PROGRESS OF FORTIFICATIONS — THE CITY DEPOPULATED — LEE AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES AT VARIANCE — LEE'S DEPARTURE — LORD STIRLING IN COMMAND — ARRIVAL OF GENERAL THOMPSON — ARRIVAL OF GENERAL PUTNAM — MARTIAL LAW ESTABLISHED.

THE rebellion of the British colonies in America, even before it assumed the more dignified form of revolution, attracted the earnest attention and serious consideration of the governments of Europe, especially of those whose interests made them regard England with fear or jealousy because of her power, her material prosperity, and her moral strength. France and Holland, in particular, rejoiced because of the diminution of Great Britain's political and commercial greatness, promised by a successful revolt of her colonies, that should lead to a dismemberment of the empire; the first because British arms had eclipsed the sun of her military glory, and shorn her of her fair possessions in the New World; the second because British navies were proudly asserting the supremacy of the seas so long enjoyed by the Dutch, as the first maritime power on the earth.

The ruler of France had also a traditional and family hatred of free institutions, and dreaded the influence of those liberal political principles that were cherished by the British constitution; while the people of Holland, more free than those of England, and proud

of their own republican government, strongly sympathized with a community struggling for the same freedom for which they and their ancestors had contended through long and bloody wars. France rejoiced at the revolt because it might weaken British power, make her own West India possessions more secure, and, perhaps, enable her to regain her lost possessions on the St. Lawrence and in Acadia; and Holland rejoiced because she saw in it a germ of her own free institutions and aspirations, springing up vigorously in the New World, and opening a new field for the beneficent and enriching operation of her own commerce. Other continental powers, less interested directly, but sympathizing with the opposers of England, also rejoiced; and, therefore, the boast of King George, in his speech from the throne in October, 1775, that the courts of Europe were friendly to him, and he saw no probability of his measures toward the Americans "being interrupted by disputes with any foreign power," was based upon an unstable foundation. He had, indeed, made application to all professedly friendly maritime powers, to prevent their subjects from "giving any assistance to the North Americans engaged in open war with England, from sending any ammunition or other commodities serving for war, &c.," but the Danish court was the only one that had been prompt in complying. The Dutch, soon afterward, issued an edict to that effect, the punishment for its violation being a fine of only four hundred and fifty dollars; too small to make shipping merchants long hesitate about the risk when such enormous profits were promised. In fact, large quantities of gunpowder were soon afterward shipped to America from ports in Holland, in glass bottles invoiced "gin." France merely warned her people that what they might do for the Americans must be done at their own risk, and that they need not expect a release from trouble by the French admiralty courts, if their vessels should be seized by the English. Spain flatly refused to issue any order.

Leading republicans in America, meanwhile, received assurances from friends in Europe, that the colonists had the sympathy, and might expect the aid of France, Spain, Holland, and even Prussia,

Plan of New York and Surrounding Territory Showing the Positions of the American and British Armies Before, During, and After the Engagements of August and September, 1776

After the patriot forces had evacuated Long Island on August 29, 1776, the army was encamped in positions extending from Kingsbridge to the Battery. The British continued their movement to Flushing, Newton, and Hell Gate, which positions were held on September 3d. The rear of his army being menaced and his retreat jeopardized, Washington deemed it prudent to withdraw his relatively small force from New York, and Congress giving him discretionary power, he evacuated the city on September 13th, leaving Putnam to occupy it with four thousand troops. The British fleet harassed the retreating forces, having ascended the Hudson as far as Bloomingdale; they were operating simultaneously on the East River. A portion of the American troops made a discreditable retreat from a small body of British on September 15th. Putnam rejoined Washington's army while Mrs. Murray was diverting Howe and his officers by very timely patriotic entertainment, and Washington with the main forces reached Harlem Heights on the same day; the British on the night of that day occupied a strong position extending from Bloomingdale to Horn's Hook. On the sixteenth, a severe engagement took place on the Plain of Harlem, which ended in a splendid victory for the patriots. Washington remained at Harlem Heights till October 23d, when he retired to White Plains and established himself.

Scale of Miles.
NORTH OR HUDSON RIVER
Fort Lee
Fort Washington
Fort Independence
Harlem R.
Morrisania
Bloomingdale
Hackensack R.
Bergen
Bedford
The New Lots
Flushing
Newtown
Bushwick
Flatbush
Flatland
Gravesend
Richmond
YORK'S
Battery
Gallows Pt.
Red Hook
Gowanus Cove
Constable Hook
Castleton
Dugle's Ferry
Lord Cornwallis
Earl Percy
Road to Jamaica
Gen. Sullivan
Gen. Lord Stirling
Americans Retiring
Position of the British Army from 22nd August to the
British
Gen. Hand's Reg't retiring on the Islands of the British
Thunder
Bombs
Carrass
Rose
Greyhound
Phoenix
Tenderness Pt.
Ferry Narrows
Dalrymple
Oyster I.
Oyster Bay
Bedloe's I.
Buckman I.
C. Kennedy
Robins Reef
The Kills
White Rock
Watering Place
Hollow Hook
Greenwich
Brooklyn
Hoboken
Bergen Point
Long Island
THE SOUND
Hell Gate
Throgs Neck
Pelham
Valentine
Philips or Dykmans
W. Briggs
William's Bridge
Rockaway
Jamaica
Hempstead
Hempstead Plains
Newtown Inlet
Sept. 3rd 1776

if a judicious course should be pursued. And according to John Jay, the continental Congress was informed, in autumn of 1775, "probably about the month of November," that a foreigner was in Philadelphia who was desirous of making to them a confidential comunication. At first no notice was taken of it, but the intimation having been several times repeated, a committee, consisting of John Jay, Doctor Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, was appointed to hear what he had to say. They agreed to meet him in a room in Carpenters' hall, and, at the time appointed, they found him there—an elderly, lame gentleman, and apparently a wounded French officer. He told them that the French king was greatly pleased with the exertions for liberty which the Americans were making; that he wished them success, and would, whenever it should be necessary, manifest more openly his friendly sentiments toward them. The committee requested to know his authority for giving these assurances. He answered only by drawing his hand across his throat, and saying: "Gentlemen, I shall take care of my head." They then asked what demonstrations of friendship they might expect from the king of France. "Gentlemen," he answered, "if you want arms, you shall have them; if you want ammunition, you shall have it; if you want money, you shall have it." The committee observed that these were important assurances, and again desired to know by what authority they were made. "Gentlemen," said he, again drawing his hand across his throat, "I shall take care of my head;" and this was the only answer they could obtain from him. He was seen in Philadelphia no more. It was the opinion of the committee that he was a secret agent of the French court, authorized to give these direct assurances, but in such a manner that he might be disavowed, if necessary.*

This visiter, no doubt, caused the adoption of a resolution by the

* See "Life and Correspondence of John Jay," i., 39. In an autograph letter of Captain William Hull (afterward major-general in the United States army) now before me, dated, Camp on Winter hill, December 18, 1775," and directed to the Honorable Andrew Adams, of Litchfield, Connecticut, the writer says: "There were two French gentlemen of distinction here, about two days ago, immediately from France. They brought twenty tuns of powder, and the general provided them carriages, and they went immediately to the Congress, for what purpose you may judge."

continental Congress, on the twenty-ninth of November, 1775, "That a committee of five be appointed for the sole purpose of corresponding with our friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and *other parts of the world*, and that they lay their correspondence before Congress, when directed."* The hints concerning the friendly disposition of Holland, given in a letter from M. Dumas,† at the Hague, to Doctor Franklin, caused the committee, soon after their appointment, to address Doctor Arthur Lee, agent of the colonies in London, and recommend his opening a correspondence with that gentleman, on American affairs.

On the nineteenth of December, Doctor Franklin, as a member of the committee, wrote a cautious letter to Dumas, in which he said: "We are threatened from England with a very powerful force, to come next year against us. We are making all the provisions in our power here to oppose that force, and we hope we shall be able to defend ourselves. But as the events of war are always uncertain, possibly, after another campaign, we may find it necessary to ask the aid of some foreign power. It gives us great pleasure to learn from you, that *tout l'Europe nous souhaite le plus heureux succès pour le maintien de nos libertés.*‡ But we wish to know whether any one of them, from principles of humanity, is disposed magnanimously to step in for the relief of an oppressed people; or whether if, as it seems likely to happen, we should be obliged to break off all connection with Britain, and declare ourselves an independent people, there is any state or power in Europe who would be willing to enter into an alliance with us for the benefit of our commerce, which amounted, before the war, to nearly seven

* The committee was composed of Benjamin Harrison, Doctor Franklin, Thomas Johnson, John Dickinson, and John Jay.

† M. Dumas was a Swiss gentleman who passed much of his time in Holland. He was a fine scholar, and wrote a preface and notes to an edition of Vattel, which was published at about the beginning of our war for Independence. Doctor Franklin became personally acquainted with him in Holland, and was so favorably impressed with his ability, integrity, and caution, that he recommended him to the committee of secret correspondence as a suitable person to be employed in their service. He accepted the commission, and was a faithful agent during the whole war. He was secretary and translator for Mr. Adams when he was minister in Holland, and was left as *chargé d'affaires* when Mr. Adams departed.—See Sparks's "Life and Writings of Franklin," (note) viii., 162.

‡ "All Europe wishes us the best success in the maintenance of our liberty."

millions sterling per annum, and must continually increase, as our people increase most rapidly." Then, in behalf of the secret committee of correspondence, Franklin asked Dumas to become the diplomatic agent of the congress at the Hague, and cautioned him to keep this matter, and all else committed to his charge, "from the knowledge of the English embassadors."*

Not long after this the secret committee resolved to send a political and commercial agent to France, to sound that government on the subject of establishing political relations between it and the revolted colonists, and to purchase supplies. That important mission was intrusted to Silas Deane, a delegate in Congress from Connecticut. He was possessed of some mercantile knowledge and experience, considerable practical talent, shrewdness, and dexterity, and a kind of strategetic ability, which appeared necessary for a diplomat. He received his commission and instructions from the secret committee on the third day March, 1776, and embarked from Philadelphia on the fifth in a vessel bound for Bordeaux. An accident compelled the vessel to return, and on the first of April, he again embarked, in a sloop, for Bermuda. He left that island for France on the fourth of May, arriving at Bordeaux early in June, and a month afterward in Paris. He was instructed to call upon M. Dobourg, in Paris, and through him obtain an audience with the Count de Vergennes, the French minister for foreign affairs. He was directed to observe great caution; to solicit aid from the French government and from individuals; and endeavor to ascertain whether the former was disposed to enter into any political or commercial relations with the colonies. In all these operations, he was to appear in public, and to strangers, only as a casual visiter in Paris on mercantile business.

But Deane appears to have been quite unequal to the duties of his mission. He was dazzled by the splendor around him, and made dizzy by the height to which he found himself elevated, when, on making his errand known to those who were permitted to stand in the immediate presence of royalty, he was surrounded

* Force's "American Archives," Fourth Series, vol. iv., 352.

by men high in authority, who treated him with marked deference. As soon as he entered upon the business of his commercial agency, he was assailed by adventurers, traders, and projectors of every kind, all ready to enter into contracts, to any amount, with him, or to furnish him with plans and means for prosecuting the war and establishing the political independence of his country, in the quickest and safest way possible. Merchants, and speculators, and military officers, beset him continually; and being too weak to endure the pressure, he made contracts, authorized agencies, and engaged foreign officers for service in America, without regard to the limited means of the Congress, the condition of the continental army, or the contingencies which might arise to frustrate the best-laid plans. The consequence was, that he involved his principals in a web of difficulties, which, as we shall observe hereafter, produced great embarrassments.

And now, having glanced at the aspect of revolutionary movements in the north and in the south, and also at the small beginnings of the remarkable diplomacy of the Revolution, we will return to a consideration of public affairs in the city of New York, where the commander-in-chief of the republican armies, crowned with the laurels of a signal triumph at Boston, had established his headquarters.

General Lee had been very active since his arrival in New York, in carrying forward works of defence already commenced under the direction of the provincial Congress, and in the construction of new ones. Pursuant to resolutions and recommendations of the continental Congress, adopted nine or ten months before, steps had been taken to fortify the most important passes of the Hudson Highlands, and to obstruct the channels of the river so as to prevent British armed vessels passing up it. On the thirtieth of May, 1775, the provincial convention of New York appointed a committee* to go to the Highlands, view the banks of the river there, and report to the Congress "the most proper place for the erection of one or more fortifications." They reported on the thirteenth of June, and

* James Clinton and Christopher Tappen.

recommended the construction of what were afterward called Forts Clinton and Constitution, the former on the high, rocky bluff of West Point, and the latter upon a low part of Martelaer's rock opposite, which is now known as Constitution island. "Your committee beg leave to observe," they said in their report, "that they are informed, that by means of four or five booms, chained together on one side of the river, ready to be drawn across, the passage can be closed up to prevent any vessel passing or repassing."

Three days afterward, a committee was appointed "to inquire the depth of water in Hudson's river;* and on the eighteenth of August, another committee was raised to superintend the erection of forts and batteries in the vicinity of West Point.† Under their direction, Bernard Romans, an English engineer commenced operations on the twenty-ninth of August, and completed Fort Constitution early in November. On the eighteenth of the same month, the continental Congress resolved to appoint a commander for that fortress, clothed with the rank of colonel; and recommended the provincial Congress of New York to empower him to raise a corps of two hundred militia in the neighboring counties, and a company of artillery in New York, to garrison it. Romans applied for the commission, but in consequence of a quarrel with his employers, he did not receive it, and the remainder of the works in the Highlands were constructed by other engineers. Such was the commencement of fortifications to guard those mountain and river passes, which we shall have occasion to consider hereafter.

From the hour when the provincial Congress‡ of New York assembled in that city toward the close of May, 1775, until the advent of General Lee, extreme caution, as we have already observed, that appeared to many minds like timidity, and to the

* Messrs. Hoffman, Glen, M'Dougall, and Paulding.—Journals of the Provincial Convention, page 45.

† Messrs. Sears, Berrien, Flemming, Rutgers, and Miller.—Ibid, page 110.

‡ In anticipation of a speedy attack upon the city of New York by the enemy, the Provincial Congress adjourned to White Plains, in Westchester county, on the thirtieth of June, 1776. They reassembled there on the ninth of July, and on the following day it was resolved that the style or title of the House should be changed from that of "the provincial Congress of the colony of New York, to that of the convention of the representatives of the state of New York," the united colonies then having been declared "free and independent *states*."—See Journal of the convention, p. 519

more zealous patriots like covert toryism, marked their proceedings. John Morin Scott, Alexander M'Dougall, John Lamb, Isaac Sears, Marinus Willett, and other ardent Sons of Liberty in New York, tried in vain, during the summer and autumn of 1775, to infuse a more healthful and defiant spirit of republicanism into the Congress, that would have awed the loyalists, encouraged the democratic masses, and prevented much mischief.

These whigs and their associates were untiring and fearless in their opposition to the imperial government, unmindful of the warnings of their timid friends, or the threats of those in authority. They well knew how the great heart of the common people was beating; and to carry out their plans with power, they appointed a vigilance committee, composed of one hundred of the stanch citizens,* who, while the provincial Congress legislated cautiously, were busy in executing the known will of the citizens at large. Under the sanction of this committee, many offences against the royal government were committed. Sears and others came through the dangerous straits of Hell-Gate at the midnight hour, in July, in a sloop from Greenwich, in Connecticut, and seized British stores at Turtle bay, a part of which were sent to the army at Boston, and a part to the troops then collecting on the shores of Lake Champlain, under Schuyler, for the invasion of Canada. They also seized a tender with stores, belonging to the *Asia*, ship-of-war, which had

* The following-named gentlemen composed the committee of one hundred: Isaac Low, *chairman;* John Jay, Francis Lewis, John Alsop, Philip Livingston, James Duane, E. Duyckman, William Seton, William W. Ludlow, Cornelius Clopper, Abraham Brinckerhoff, Henry Remsen, Robert Ray, Evert Bancker, Joseph Totten, Abraham P. Lott, David Beekman, Isaac Roosevelt, Gabriel H. Ludlow, William Walton, Daniel Phœnix, Frederick Jay, Samuel Broome, John De Lancey, Augustus Van Horne, Abraham Duryee, Samuel Verplanck, Rudolphus Ritzema, John Morton, Joseph Hallett, Robert Benson, Abraham Brasher, Leonard Lispenard, Nicholas Hoffman, P. V. Brugh Livingston, Thomas Marsten, Lewis Pintard, John Imlay, Eleazar Miller, Jr., John Broome, John B. Moore, Nicholas Bogart, John Anthony, Victor Bicker, William Goforth, Hercules Mulligan, Alexander M'Dougal, John Reade, Joseph Ball, George Janeway, John White, Gabriel W. Ludlow, John Lasher, Theophilus Anthony, Thomas Smith, Richard Yates, Oliver Templeton, Jacobus Van Landby, Jeremiah Platt, Peter S. Curtenius, Thomas Randall, Lancaster Burling, Benjamin Kissam, Jacob Lefferts, Anthony Van Dam, Abraham Walton, Hamilton Young, Nicholas Roosevelt, Cornelius P. Low, Francis Bassett, James Beekman, Thomas Ivers, William Dunning, John Berrien, Benjamin Helme, William W. Gilbert, Daniel Dunscombe, John Lamb, Richard Sharpe, John Morin Scott, Jacob Van Voorhis, Comfort Sands, Edward Flemming, Peter Goelet, Gerrit Kettletas, Thomas Buchanan, James Desbrosses, Petrus Byvanck, Lott Embree. —See Dunlap's "History of New York, ii., appendix, ccxvi.

recently come into the harbor, with Governor Tryon on board; and they took possession of provisions and stores belonging to the government, at Greenwich.

These and kindred movements, stimulated the provincial Congress to action more rebellious than it had yet exhibited. That body, guided by the popular will, and perceiving a resort to arms to be unavoidable, ordered Captain John Lamb, the leader of the artillery company, on the twenty-second of August, to remove the cannon from the grand battery at Fort George, at the foot of Broadway, and take them to a place of safety, that they might not be used offensively against the town. Assisted by an independent corps under Colonel Lasher, and a body of citizens led by the bold Sears, Lamb proceeded to the battery in the evening of the twenty-third, where an armed barge from the *Asia* was watching their movements, information of the intended seizure having reached the commander of that vessel. The republicans were fired upon by the men in the barge. Shots were returned. The barge, with wounded men, fled to the *Asia*, when the port-holes of that vessel were quickly opened. Captain Lamb ordered the drums to beat to arms. The church-bells rang out an alarum; and while all was confusion and terror in the city, several broadsides were fired from the *Asia*. No life was sacrificed, but buildings were injured, and terror seized the people. A rumor spread that the town was to be sacked and burned; and hundreds of men, women, and children, were seen at midnight, hurrying with their light effects to places of safety beyond the doomed city. But in the midst of the uproar, the republicans in arms stood firm; and in the face of the cannonade, nearly all the heavy guns on the battery were deliberately removed.*

Apparently startled at what they had done, the provincial Con-

* There were twenty-one iron eighteen-pounders, and some smaller cannon on the battery. Alexander Hamilton was then a student in King's (now Columbia) college, and followed Sears on that occasion. He had organized a corps for artillery service among his fellow-students, and fifteen of them were with him in that enterprise. Among their trophies were two nine-pounders, which they buried in the earth on the college green, in spite of the menaces of Doctor Cooper the tory president of the institution. These were afterward used as fenders at the entrance gate of the college, where they remained until the building was demolished in 1856

gress returned to their temporizing policy, and on the twenty-fifth, resolved that no more cannon should be taken from the battery, and ordered a competent guard to be established for the protection of Tryon, who was in the fort. But that functionary, taking counsel of his fears, followed the example of Dunmore. Mayor Mathews and others promised him protection, but he had more confidence in gunpowder and the "wooden walls of old England," than in any "arm of man," and he took refuge on board the British sloop-of-war *Halifax*, where he received his council for business, and attempted to exercise civil authority. He remained on board the *Halifax* until early in December, when he made the cabin of the *Duchess of Gordon* his home and refuge. There he remained while he lingered in the harbor of New York for several months, vainly hoping to re-establish royal authority in that province.

But the presence of Tryon, and of British armed ships in the harbor, had a powerful effect, as we have observed, in suppressing the vigorous growth — or at least the outward manifestations of the vigorous growth — of republicanism in the city. There was a continual struggle between the zealous patriots, and the lukewarm and the avowed loyalists. The influence of the latter was sufficiently potential to keep open a free intercourse between Governor Tryon and the tories, private and official; and the inhabitants of the city and vicinity were permitted to carry supplies to the British ships-of-war. This state of things displeased General Lee, for he disliked half-way measures and middle-men. At the first conference with the committees of the continental and provincial Congresses, he remonstrated with them concerning the unwise indulgences extended to their avowed enemies. This, and this alone, was a subject for continual disagreement between Lee and the civil authorities, for he was anxious to cut off, at once, all intercourse between the ships and the shore; and it gave rise to an occasional spicy correspondence. In all things else they harmonized pretty well, although the restraints, which the necessities of holding conferences at every step imposed upon Lee, were very irksome to him.

A general plan of preparations was agreed to at the first con-

ference.—"It is, in the first place, agreed and justly," Lee wrote to Washington on the fifth of February, "that to fortify the town against shipping is impracticable; but we are to fortify lodgments in some commanding part of the city for two thousand men. We are to erect enclosed batteries on both sides the water near Hell-Gate, which will answer the double purpose of securing the town against piracies through the sound, and secure our communication with Long Island, now become a more capital point than ever, as it is determined to form a strong fortified camp of three thousand men on the island, immediately opposite to New York. The pass in the highlands is to be made as respectable as possible, and guarded by a battalion." These proposed operations were immediately commenced, and very soon men were actively engaged in erecting batteries and redoubts at eligible points along the East river to Harlem, and along the Hudson to King's Bridge.

These vigorous and formidable preparations alarmed the commanders of the two ships-of-war (*Asia* and *Duchess of Gordon*) that lay in the East river at Peck's slip, and they dropped down to the bay and anchored. Meanwhile Captain Parker, of the *Phœnix*, had been informed that Lee was about to remove all the cannon that remained on the Grand battery and wharves, and he threatened to burn the town if it should be done. The menace had no effect upon Lee; and at noonday, near the middle of February, they were all removed to a place of safety. Parker did not fire a shot, and published a curious reason for the silence of his guns. He said it was manifestly the intention of Lee, and of the New England men under him, to bring destruction upon the town, it being hated by them for its loyal principles, but he was determined not to gratify them; therefore, to spite the rebel and his followers, Parker kept his port-holes closed! "The people here," Lee wrote to Washington on the fourteenth of February, "laugh at his [Parker's] nonsense, and begin to despise the menaces which formerly used to throw them into convulsions. To do them justice," he continued, "the whole show a wonderful alacrity; and in removing the cannon, men and boys of all ages worked with the greatest zeal and pleasure.

I really believe that the generality are as well affected as any on the continent."

The cannon were removed by Lee without asking the opinion or the sanction of the provincial Congress, and the measure drew upon him severe animadversions. But he cared little what people said or thought, and he went on, as even warm republicans expressed it, "with a high hand," when he observed how very cautiously all men around him, except a few ardent Sons of Liberty, appeared to feel and act. His self-reliance was a marvellous staff of support; and the effects of his daring movements upon the enemy were so palpable, that he felt no hesitation in following the dictates of his own rash impulses. The ships-of-war had been frightened still farther away from the city by his last bold measure, and lay far down the bay; and he proceeded to dismantle Fort George, on the side next the town, to prevent its being converted into a citadel; and also to barricade the principal streets.

Timid men stood and wondered; courageous ones felt a secret satisfaction; and the provincial convention paused in astonishment, mixed with indignation, when they saw the defiant workings of this resolute man in their midst. Lee perceived the necessity of a stern will to mould the discordant social and political elements into substantial form, so that the civil authority should fairly represent the popular will, and not disappoint its expectations. He knew the dangers of a relapse; and in a letter to Washington, at the close of February, after receiving notice of his appointment to the command in Canada, he remarked: "The Congress have, as yet, not taken the least step for the security of this place. The instant I leave it, I conclude the provincial Congress and inhabitants in general will relapse into their former hysterics; the men-of-war and Mr. Tryon will return to their old stations at the wharves; and the first regiments which arrive from England will take quiet possession of the town and Long Island." He then complained bitterly of the apathy of the continental Congress. It had been agreed by the committee of conference, that he ought to have five thousand men in New York and vicinity—"They left us," he said,

"and no notice has been taken of the affair since;" and, on the twentieth of February, his whole force, including minute-men, did not exceed seventeen hundred men. His strongest regiment (Ward's) was stationed on Long Island, making preparations to construct three redoubts there; two others (Stirling's and Waterbury's), with two hundred minute-men, were quartered in the city, and about two hundred more, under Colonel Drake, were at Horn's Hook, constructing a redoubt that would contain three hundred men, to command the pass of Hell-Gate. He had then thrown a barrier across Broadway, just above the Bowling Green, and was about to erect batteries on the bank southwest of Trinity church, which had been ordered by the provincial Congress on the twenty-sixth.

Lee concluded his letter to the commander-in-chief with a frank avowal of his disregard of all civil authority. "Governor Tryon and the *Asia*," he said, "still continue betwixt Nutten's (now Gov ernor's) and Bedloe's islands. It has pleased his Excellency, in violation of the compact he had made, to seize several vessels from Jersey, laden with flour. It has, in return, pleased my Excellency,* to stop all provisions from the city, and cut off all intercourse with him, a measure which has thrown the mayor, council, and tories, into agonies. The propensity, or rather rage, for paying court to this great man, is inconceivable. They can not be weaned from him. We must put wormwood on his paps, or they will cry to suck, as they are in their second childhood." In this matter, Lee violated the orders of the provincial Congress, which, by resolution, had forbidden all interdiction of intercourse between Tryon and the inhabitants of the city. He had already, in a letter to that body, expressed his opinion of their course, saying: "For my own part, the measure of suffering ourselves to be plundered, and at the same time feeding our plunderers, appears a degree of lowness of

* Lee despised these prefixes to the names of men in office, as "unworthy of a great, free, manly, equal commonwealth."—"For my own part," he said, "I would as lief they would put ratsbane in my mouth, as the *Excellency* with which I am daily crammed. How much more true dignity was there in the simplicity of address among the Romans! Marcus Tullius Cicero; Decius Brutus Imperatore; or Caio Marcello Consuli, than to 'His Excellency Major-General Noodle,' or to the Honorable John Doodle.'"—Letter to Patrick Henry, July 29, 1776.

spirit which reflects dishonor, and must encourage the enemy still to take greater liberties;"* and he urged them to change their policy.

From the commencement, Lee had made the tories the special objects of his attention, for he considered them the worst enemies arrayed against the patriots. The instructions given him by Washington, to disarm "such persons upon Long Island and elsewhere (and, if necessary, otherwise securing them), whose conduct and declarations have rendered them justly suspected of designs unfriendly to the views of Congress," were interpreted by Lee with the broadest latitude, and he rarely gave any avowed loyalist the benefit of a doubt as to his intentions. Many were arrested and confined, others were subjected to the humiliation of signing a test-oath similar to that which he administered to the Rhode Island tories, and great numbers of them fled from the city.

These proceedings, and the continual apprehension of impending danger, greatly diminished the population of the city. "We are now in a state of perfect peace and security," wrote a New York merchant to his friend, "were it not for our apprehensions of future danger. To see the vast number of houses shut up, one would think the city almost evacuated. Women and children are scarcely to be seen in the streets. Troops are daily coming in; they break open and quarter themselves in any house they find shut up. Necessity knows no law. Private interest must give way to public good."†

Lee's assumption of power in arresting tories, and cutting off supplies for the British vessels-of-war, was condemned by the "law-abiding" citizens, not as unwise and unnecessary, but because it was an exercise of prerogatives claimed to be vested solely in the civil authority. Of this, and other alleged usurpations, the provincial Congress complained, and sent a committee with a letter to General Lee, in which they gave him to understand that they alone held the right "of apprehending, trying, and punishing citizens." They

* Journals of the New York Provincial Congress, page 312.

† Frederick Rhinelander to Peter Van Schaick, American Archives, in Fourth Series, iv., 1479.

also requested him to countermand his orders to the port-guards to cut off supplies for the war-vessels. Lee treated the committee with his usual rough courtesy, but informed them that he considered his course justified by the circumstances. He told them that he had been appointed to the chief leadership in the South, and was to resign his command in New York, to Lord Stirling, that very night; adding, that "if he was to continue he would not consent to supply them with any provisions, as they were at open war with us; that he hoped Lord Stirling would be of the same opinion; and that his instructions from the continental Congress were to use every means in his power for the defence of the city."*

General Lee left New York for the South on the seventh of March, and the command of the troops devolved upon Lord Stirling, of New Jersey (who had just been appointed a brigadier), General Thompson, his superior in rank not having yet arrived. Stirling was a patriot of truest stamp, and was active from the beginning to the end of the contest, but did not live to see the fruits of the victory that was achieved.† His proclivities toward republicanism were early manifested; and as a member of the provincial council of New Jersey, he labored assiduously in the cause of right. Having had some experience in the French war, his countrymen turned toward him as a competent leader when they were called to arms; and in 1775, the provincial convention of New Jersey appointed him colonel of the first regiment of militia.‡ He was

* Report of Committee; Journal of Provincial Congress, page 341.

† William Alexander, earl of Stirling, was born in New York city, in 1726. His father, who was heir presumptive to the title of earl of Stirling, was an active partisan of the old Scotch pretender, and took refuge in America after the rebellion in 1715. Alexander was in the old French war as aid-de-camp and secretary to General Shirley; and he accompanied that officer to England, in 1755. While there he instituted legal proceedings to obtain possession of the title of his father, to which he was heir. He did not obtain a legal recognition of his title, but his right to it was generally conceded; and from that time he was addressed as earl of Stirling. He returned to America in 1761, and soon afterward married a daughter of Philip Livingston. He settled at Baskenridge, in New Jersey, and there the Revolution found him. He performed varied and active service during the war. He died at Albany, on the fifteenth of January, 1783, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.

‡ One of Stirling's first enterprises against the enemy was performed toward the close of January, 1776. With the regular troops under his command, and some volunteers from Elizabethtown and its neighborhood, he proceeded one night, with a pilot boat and three smaller vessels, to attack the *Blue Mountain Valley*, a British transport-ship then lying off Sandy Hook. She mounted six guns, and was laden with stores for the enemy. With nothing but muskets, Stirling and his party can-

now fifty years of age, and prepared by large experience and observation of men and things, to act a conspicuous part in the struggle. Yet he modestly remarked to an intimate friend, that General Lee had left him "in a situation not a little perplexing, especially to a young beginner, as he might call himself, after twenty years retirement."*

When General Lee was on his way to New York, toward the close of January, he ordered Stirling to that post with his regiment, pursuant to instructions received from Washington, and he reached the city on the day after Lee's arrival. They co-operated harmoniously, for his views in regard to tories were similar to those of Lee, though less radical. On assuming the command after Lee's departure, his first care was to cut off all communication between the inhabitants of Staten Island and Long Island with ships-of-war in the neighboring waters. His effective force then amounted to about two thousand men, and with a part of them he had just commenced vigorous measures against the tories, under the sanction of a resolve of the continental Congress,† and permission of the committee of safety of New York,‡ when intelligence came from the east, that the British army, driven out of Boston, was probably on its way toward Sandy Hook. Stirling immediately called for more troops from New Jersey and Connecticut; and in expectation of the speedy arrival of the American army from New England, he raised a corps of artificers to construct barracks for their accommodation, and entered into large contracts for the supply of clothing for those troops. Energy and prudence marked every step of his career; and the committee of safety, having confidence in his discretion, willingly co-operated with him in placing the city in a state of defence, especially as immediate danger seemed to be impending. Orders were issued by that body, that all the inhabitants capable

tured the transport, and conducted her in safety into the port of Perth Amboy. On the twenty ninth, the continental Congress honored Stirling and his associates with a vote of thanks.—Duer's "Life of Lord Stirling," page 124.

* Autograph Letter of Lord Stirling to General Schuyler, March 10, 1776.

† See Journals of Congress, ii., 88.

‡ The New York Provincial Congress adjourned on Saturday, the sixteenth of March, and on the eighteenth the committee of safety to whom all power was delegated, commenced their sessions.

of fatigue duty, should be immediately employed on the fortifications. Similar orders were issued in Kings county, on the recommendation of the Committee of Safety; and a mounted guard was established on the site of the present Fort Hamilton, near the west end of Long Island, to watch for the approach of the expected enemy, and to send intelligence of their arrival, to headquarters in the city.

General Thompson arrived from Philadelphia on the evening of the twentieth of March,* and assumed the chief command, when Stirling repaired to New Jersey to expedite measures for putting the eastern portion of that colony in a good state of defence. At that moment the people were much excited by recent movements of Governor Tryon, who had caused the *Duchess of Gordon*, on which he resided, to be placed in the North river, opposite Paulus's Hook (now Jersey City), and from which, on the fifteenth of March, he sent a proclamation "To the Inhabitants of the Colony of New York." It exhorted the rebellious to return to their allegiance while the door of royal mercy remained open, and threatened the obstinate with a chastising rod. A letter from him to General

* From a manuscript "Return of Batteries in and about New York," made to General Thompson on the twenty-fourth of March, 1776, I have compiled the following statement:—

Grenadier's battery, near the air-furnace on the bank of the North river (between the present Franklin and North Moore streets), 5 guns and 26 men; *Jersey battery*, a little westward of the first (between Reade and Duane streets), 5 guns and 26 men; *McDougall's battery*, southwest of Trinity church, on the high bank of the river, 6 guns and 26 men; *Broadway barrier*, "very near the Bowling-Green, or the king's statue," 2 guns and 13 men; *Coenties battery*, on Ten Eycke's wharf, Coenties slip, 5 guns and 26 men; *Stirling battery* (in rear of which was to be a citadel occupying about five acres), on Long Island (Brooklyn heights), opposite the Fly-market, 8 guns and 37 men; *Waterbury's battery*, at the ship-yards (on the site of the present Catharine market), 7 guns and 26 men; *Badlam's battery*, on Rutger's first hill, just above the last-mentioned (intersection of Market and Madison streets), 8 guns and 39 men; *Thompson's battery*, at Horn's Hook, 9 guns and 39 men; *Independent battery*, on Bayard's Mount, afterward called Bunker's hill, within the intersections of Centre, Mott, Mulberry, Grand, and Broome streets, 12 guns and 26 men. This was the largest work except Fort George.

"Besides the foregoing," says the report, "there is a breastwork at Peck's, Beekman's, Burling's, and Fly slip, as also at the Coffee-House [corner of Pearl and Wall streets], Old slip, Coenties market, and the Exchange, and one about midway of Broad street, of this construction ⎽⎺⎽, and the same are made in several of the streets leading from the North river to the Broadway. There is also a line of circumvallation to be drawn from river to river, taking in the Independent battery on Bayard's hill, and Jones's, where there is a fortification to be erected called *Washington*. To which may be added a redoubt round the hospital, as also a work to be erected on the common, near the Liberty Pole." The latter was between the present city hall and Broadway, in front of Warren street

Howe, urging him to hasten to New York, as the rebels were fortifying, had just been intercepted; and rumors of a conspiracy of some kind between the governor and leading tories in the city, increased the excitement. "The friends of government," said a etter-writer of the time, "were provoked at being so distinguished, and the friends of liberty hung him in effigy, and printed a dying speech for him." The tone of his proclamation lost him many friends; and, on the whole, his injudicious conduct was favorable to the growth of republicanism, for thinking men learned to look upon him with contempt.

General Putnam arrived on the fourth of April, and that veteran of the French war, now almost sixty years of age, immediately placed the city under martial law. He prescribed and enforced rules of conduct for the citizens as well as the soldiers, and adopted measures to put a stop to the intercourse between the inhabitants and the ministerial fleet. He issued an order declaring, that "any person taken in the act of holding communication with the ships-of-war in the harbor would be considered an enemy, and treated as such;" and he kept the able-bodied men of the town at work upon the fortifications. When Washington arrived some of these were completed, and others were in a state of great forwardness.

CHAPTER X.

WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK — STATE OF SOCIETY THERE — YIELDING OF THE CIVIL POWER — CO-OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE OF SAFETY — ALARMING INTELLIGENCE FROM CANADA — DISAFFECTION OF THE CANADIANS AND INDIANS — EMPLOYMENT OF THE SAVAGES — REINFORCEMENTS SENT TO CANADA — COMMISSIONERS OF CONGRESS IN CANADA — OBJECTS OF THEIR MISSION — SAD CONDITION OF THE ARMY IN CANADA — DEATH OF GENERAL THOMAS — GENERAL SULLIVAN IN COMMAND — EVENTS AT THE CEDARS — INDIAN MASSACRE — DISHONORABLE CONDUCT OF THE BRITISH COMMANDER — THE RESULT — SULLIVAN'S CHEERING LETTER — HIS ASPIRATIONS — WASHINGTON'S SAGACITY AND CAUTION — HIS GUARDED LETTER TO THE CONGRESS.

On his arrival in New York, Washington established his headquarters in a spacious brick house (which was demolished in 1854) on the east side of Pearl street, a little south of Maiden Lane, where Mrs. Washington, who had remained with the general since December, presided over the domestic affairs of the mansion with her peculiar grace, dignity, and beautiful simplicity.* Her son and his young wife still formed a part of the family, but were preparing to set out for Maryland in a few days. The wives of Greene, Sullivan, and Knox, and of two or three other officers, accompanied their husbands, and formed agreeable companions and needed solace for Mrs. Washington, in a place that now wore every aspect of a garrison, instead of that of a commercial mart. Society in New York was completely disrupted, and its best elements had been driven to the interior for refuge from impending danger. Social intercourse,

* At about the middle of May, Washington left his city residence, and took up his abode at Richmond Hill, in the fine mansion built about the year 1760, by Abraham Martin, a paymaster-general in the British forces in America. It was upon an eminence about a mile and a quarter from the town; and from its front a fine lawn sloped down to the bank of the Hudson, skirted on the north by a thick wood. There Captain Aaron Burr, on his return from Canada, was first introduced to the commander-in-chief; and that pleasant mansion and adjacent grounds, afterward became his property. In later years the house became known as the Richmond Hill theatre, and its location was near the intersection of Charlton and Varick streets.

except to a very limited extent, was out of the question; indeed all minds were occupied in the contemplation of the momentous events of the hour.

The labors of Washington and his military family were arduous and incessant. "I give no kind of amusements myself," he said, "and consequently those about me can have none, but are confined from morning till evening, hearing and answering the applications and letters of one and another, which will now, I expect, receive a considerable addition, as the business of the northern and eastern departments, if I continue here, must, I suppose, pass through my hands."

Washington deeply lamented the lingering timidity of the civil power in New York, and he resolved, at all hazards, to put an end to the suicidal policy, yet pursued, of furnishing the ministerial fleet with provisions, and allowing intercourse between the governor and the loyalists on shore. "I fear I shall have a difficult card to play in this government," he wrote to Colonel Reed; but his wisdom and firmness soon harmonized all conflicting sentiments concerning the chief evil just alluded to. On the seventeenth of April he addressed a most judicious letter to the committee of safety, in which he expressed his earnest desire to "go hand in hand with the civil authority." He assured them, however, that if the best interests of the country should require him to depart from that fellowship, he should "choose the least of two evils." With this preface he referred directly to the continued intercourse with the royal governor and the king's ships, and pronounced it most injurious to the common cause. "A moment's reflection," he said, "not only evinces this truth, but points out the glaring absurdity of such a procedure. We are to consider ourselves either in a state of peace or war with Great Britain. If the former, why are our ports shut up, our trade destroyed, our property seized, our towns burnt, and our worthy and valuable citizens led into captivity, and suffering the most cruel hardships? If the latter, my imagination is not fertile enough to suggest a reason in support of the intercourse."

Washington then suggested that the political prudence which might have justified the correspondence and indulgence, when the city was in a weak and defenceless state, could not be put in plea now, and added: "To tell you, gentlemen, that the advantages of an intercourse of this kind are all on the side of the enemy, whilst we derive not the smallest benefit from it, would be telling what must be obvious to every one. It is, indeed, so glaring, that even the enemy themselves must despise us for suffering it to be continued; for, besides their obtaining supplies of every kind, by which they are enabled to continue in your harbors, it also opens a regular channel of intelligence, by which they are, from time to time, made acquainted with the number and extent of our works, our strength, and all our movements; by which they are enabled to regulate their own plans, to our great disadvantge and injury." He concluded by urging the committee to co-operate with him in such measures as should be most effectual, "either to prevent any future correspondence with the enemy, or in bringing to condign punishment such persons as may be hardy and wicked enough to carry it on."*

This letter had the desired effect. That implicit confidence which was withheld from Lee by the civil authority, was fully reposed in Washington, for no one doubted his disinterested patriotism, wisdom, and discretion; and on the following day, the committee of safety passed a resolution prohibiting all persons from holding any intercourse with the king's vessels in the harbor, under severe penalties. "Convinced, with you," they said in a letter to Washington, a few days later, "that there can be little doubt tha things will go well under a harmonious co-operation of the civil and military powers, permit us once more, sir, to assure you of our most vigorous exertions in seconding your efforts in the common cause."†

And now was almost ended that hybrid policy, half-defiant and half-submissive, which for nearly a year had distinguished the government of the colony of New York, to the great scandal of

* Journal of the New York Committee of Safety, page 411. † Ibid. page 420.

the people at large and the serious detriment of the republican cause. From this time the committee of safety assumed a more decided and patriotic character; and when, three months afterward, the continental Congress had declared the colonies free and independent states, and a large British army and navy were hovering like vultures for prey in the vicinity, the civil power of New York exhibited no signs of frailty, and its shoulder to the car of the Revolution was as potential as any on the continent.

While Washington was using every means in his power to place the city of New York in a strong defensive position, intelligence that from time to time came from the North, gave him great uneasiness, and increased the burden of his cares. The vigilant Schuyler kept him continually informed of the progress of events in Canada; and as the success of the republican army there became more and more unpromising as the spring advanced, the commander-in-chief called more urgently upon the proper authorities for reinforcements to send to the St. Lawrence. Not the least of the evil tidings that reached him from that quarter, was the total disaffection of the Canadians, on whose friendship he had placed great reliance. The chief causes of that disaffection we have already mentioned; and these were forcibly set forth in a letter written by Colonel Hazen, on the first of April, to General Schuyler. He represented the common people as no longer friends to the republicans, but as enemies, waiting for an opportunity to take up arms against them. "With respect to the better sort of people, both French and English," he said, "seven eighths are tories, who would wish to see our throats cut, and perhaps would readily assist in doing it." He also represented the Indians as cool, and standing aloof; and concluded by saying: "We have ourselves brought about by mismanagement, what Governor Carleton himself could never effect."*

Deprecating the employment of the savages in the contest, the efforts of the colonists had hitherto been directed solely to keep them in a position of neutrality. Washington had long perceived

* Manuscript Letter.

the futility of this policy, because the warlike propensities of the Indians would not allow them to remain quiet while the sounds of war fell upon their ears. "You, who know the temper and disposition of the savages," he wrote to General Schuyler on the nineteenth of April, "will, I doubt not, think with me, that it will be impossible to keep them in a state of neutrality." To the president of Congress he wrote, on the same day: "They must, and, no doubt, soon will, take an active part either for or against us; and I submit to Congress, whether it would not be best immediately to engage them on our side, and to use our utmost endeavor to prevent their minds being poisoned by ministerial emissaries, which will ever be the case while a king's garrison is suffered to remain in their country."

But the Congress hesitated. It was well known that the ruling maxim of the Indians in their alliance with the white people was, to take the strongest side, where they were paid the most liberally, where there was the least risk and the largest opportunity for plunder. The Congress had small means, and was compelled to be parsimonious; therefore they thought it prudent to go no further at present than to continue endeavors to keep the savages from joining the enemy. They were soon compelled to change their policy, as we shall perceive presently.

On the twenty-first of April, Washington sent four regiments up the Hudson river, for service in Canada, under the command of Colonels Greaton, Patterson, Bond, and Poor; also a company of riflemen, another of artificers, and two engineers, the whole under the command of Brigadier-General Thompson. Alarming news still came from the North, and a few days afterward, the continental Congress ordered Washington to send six more regiments in that direction, and inquired whether still more troops would be necessary to the support of the republican cause in Canada, and if so, whether they could be spared from New York.

At that time Washington was much perplexed by vague rumors concerning the embarkation of British and German troops for America. Their particular destination was unknown. "Should

they send the whole force under General Howe up the river St. Lawrence, to relieve Quebec and recover Canada," he replied to the queries of the Congress, "the troops gone and now going will be insufficient to stop their progress; and should they think proper to send that or an equal force this way from Great Britain, for the purpose of possessing this city and securing the navigation of Hudson's river, the troops left here will not be sufficient to oppose them; and yet, for anything we know, they may attempt both; both being of the greatest importance to them, if they have men." At the same time he informed the Congress, that he had ordered the six regiments to embark as soon as vessels could be obtained, under the command of Brigadier-General Sullivan, who was directed to join General Thomas, in Canada, as speedily as possible. By the first of May these reinforcements, with four regiments commanded by Colonels M'Dougall, James Clinton, Ritzema, and Wynkoop, which had been raised by the provincial Congress of New York some months before, and a fifth that had been organized in the north under Colonel Gansevoort, were on their way toward the St. Lawrence.

Meanwhile the commissioners appointed by the continental Congress to repair to the St. Lawrence, "to promote or to form a union between the colonies and the people of Canada," had entered upon their duties. They received their instructions on the twentieth of March, and on the second of April they left the city of New York in a sloop, for Albany. At the head of the commission was Doctor Franklin, then over seventy years of age, who, almost twenty years before, had urged upon the British government the great importance of conquering Canada.* Samuel Chase, a popular and distinguished lawyer of Maryland, and then in the prime of young manhood; and Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, in the same colony, a finished scholar and gentleman, five years the senior of Chase, were Franklin's associates. By special invitation, given

* "It is known, morever," says Mr. Sparks, "that his advice, at this time, was both received and followed. It has been said on good authority, that the expedition against Canada, and its consequences, in the victory of Wolfe at Quebec, and the conquest of that country, may be chiefly ascribed to Franklin."—Life and Writings of Franklin, i., 248.

by the continental Congress, the Reverend John Carroll, who afterward became the first Roman catholic archbishop in the United States, accompanied them to "assist the commissioners in such things as they might think useful," it being wisely considered that his influence would be great among a people who were almost wholly members of the Romish church.

The commissioners were instructed to use every effort to win back the friendship of the Canadians, by assuring them of kind treatment, undoubted victory, and great advantages to flow from their union with the colonies already in arms. They were to tell them that the rights of conscience and of property should be inviolate. They were instructed to recommend the adoption of the committee system for correspondence and watchfulness; and to take measures, by calling a convention, to establish a local government in union with the other colonies. The commissioners were also authorized to set up a free press in Montreal; and they were clothed with full power to settle all disputes, to reform all abuses, to enforce peace and good order, to sit and vote in councils-of-war, to erect and demolish fortifications, to suspend military officers, and to establish the trade of Canada with the Indians.*

With these instructions the commissioners proceeded. They were accompanied by the Baron de Woedtke, a Prussian general, and after a voyage of about four days and a half, they arrived at Albany, where they were received and entertained by General Schuyler, for two days. With the family of that gentleman, they journeyed to his seat at Saratoga, and thence by way of Lakes George and Champlain, to Canada. They did not reach Montreal until the twenty-ninth, almost a month after their departure from New York; and they had suffered many hardships.† There they were received by General Arnold and a great body of officers and gentry, and were greeted with loud huzzas and salutes of cannon. At Arnold's quarters they were welcomed by a large number of

* American Archives, v., 411.

† At this time (1858) the journey from New York to Montreal may be made in twenty-four hours.

leading French inhabitants, with whom they partook of tea and "an elegant supper, which was followed with the singing of the ladies."*

On the following day a council-of-war was held, consisting of General Arnold, the three commissioners, General de Woedtke, and Colonels Hazen and De Haas, when it was agreed to erect fortifications at Richelieu and Jaques Cartier, "two important points, the last eleven and the former fifteen leagues above Quebec; also to build immediately four new gallies or gondolas, at Chamblée," under the direction of General Arnold, assisted by Colonel Hazen, who was then appointed to the command at the latter place.†

Doctor Franklin's health suffered much from the fatigues of the journey, yet he entered with cheerfulness upon the duties of his mission. But he soon perceived that all efforts to secure Canada, except by a strong military force, would be utterly useless, and that his mission for establishing civil government there was at an end. To the same conclusion the Reverend Mr. Carroll was speedily brought, after conversing freely with the clergy, whose influence over the peasantry was almost omnipotent. He found them generally contented with British rule, and appeared to have no serious political or social discomforts to complain off; while the most of them freely expressed their detestation of the "Bostonians," as the American troops were called. He, therefore, perceived that his mission, also, was at an end; and on the thirteenth of May, the venerable statesman and the accomplished priest, left St. John for the South. They reached Albany after many difficulties, where they again experienced the hospitalities of General Schuyler's family, and were sent to New York in his post-chaise. The other two commissioners remained in Canada to assist in military operations there.

The republican army, after its flight from Quebec, was chiefly assembled at the mouth of the Sorel and immediate vicinity, and presented a most melancholy spectacle. Everything was in confusion. There was little or no discipline among the troops, and

* Letter from Reverend John Carroll, American Archives, Fourth Series, v., 1167.

† Autograph Letter of Arnold to Schuyler.

destitution and distress everywhere appeared. The soldiers had left a greater part of their baggage at Quebec, when they fled, and were in want of almost every necessary of food and clothing. So small and irregular had been the supply of money for the army, that the credit of Congress was utterly exhausted. "Even a cart," said the commissioners, "can not be procured without ready money or force."—"Figure to yourself," they said, "an army broken and disheartened, half of it under inoculation or other diseases; soldiers without pay, without discipline, and altogether reduced to live from hand to mouth, depending on the scanty and precarious supplies of a few half-starved cattle, and trifling quantities of flour, which have hitherto been picked up in different parts of the country."*

On the second of June, a week after the commissioners drew this picture of the suffering army, General Thomas died of the small-pox at Chamblée, and was wept over by many a sorrowing soldier, for he was greatly beloved by them all.

General Thompson was at Sorel when General Thomas sickened, and as the inefficient Wooster had resolved to leave the northern army, doubtless to avoid the implied censure of a recall,† the command devolved temporarily upon Thompson. At that time, a British and German force of at least thirteen thousand men, including the Canadians and Indians in the interest of the ministry, were on the St. Lawrence, under the respective commands of Generals Carleton, Burgoyne, Phillips, Fraser, Reidesel, and others, and were preparing to make their way toward Montreal and St. John. The veteran Maclean, with an advanced corps of eight hundred men, had been detached to take his first position at Deshambault. When informed of this movement, Thompson sent Colonel St. Clair, with six or seven hundred men, to make a

* Commissioners to the President of Congress, May 27, 1776.—American Archives, vi., 589.

† "General Thomas is now at Chamblée, under the small-pox. Being taken with that disorder, he left the camp at Sorel, and wrote to General Wooster to come and take the command. When the interests of our country and the safety of your army are at stake, we think it very improper to conceal our sentiments, either with regard to persons or things. General Wooster is, in our opinion, unfit—totally unfit—to command your army and conduct the war. We have, hitherto, prevailed on him to remain in Montreal. His stay in this colony is unnecessary, and even prejudicial to our affairs. We would, therefore, humbly advise his recall."—*Letter of Commissioners to the Continental Congress, May* 27, 1776. *American Archives*, vi., 590.

stand in opposition to him, at Three Rivers, about half way between Quebec and Montreal, while he prepared his sick and his baggage for a retreat, if it should be necessary.

General Sullivan arrived at Sorel with his reinforcements three days after Thomas died, and assumed the chief command of all the forces. He found Thompson with only about two hundred men fit for duty to defend that important post. His arrival, with his brigade, was timely, and at a most critical moment, for the inhabitants who had taken sides with the republicans, were in great distress because of the threatened vengeance of Carleton. "It really was affecting," Sullivan wrote to Washington, "to see the banks of the Sorel lined with men, women, and children, leaping and clapping their hands for joy to see me arrive; it gave no less joy to General Thompson, who seemed to be wholly forsaken, and left to fight against an unequal force, or retreat before them."

Meanwhile stirring events were in progress higher up on the St. Lawrence. At the mouth of the Oswegatchie river, where Ogdensburgh now stands, there was a small British fort, which was used chiefly as a place of rendezvous for the Indians and tories of Tryon county and central and western New York, who joined the enemy in the spring of 1776. There Guy Johnson with tories, and the savages under Brant, were received; and there, in April, preparations were made to co-operate with Carleton in driving the republicans out of Canada. To watch this vultures' nest and prevent the enemy descending the river, the Americans had established a military post at the Cedars, a point about forty miles above Montreal; and there Colonel Bedell, with three hundred and ninety New Hampshire troops, was stationed early in May. On the eleventh, Captain Forster, of the British army, who commanded at Oswegatchie, with a detachment of forty regulars, one hundred Canadians, and five hundred Indians under Brant, descended the St. Lawrence to attack the little fort at the Cedars. Bedell, who appears to have boasted of more courage than he actually possessed, fled to Montreal, under pretence of seeking reinforcements for the garrison, and left the command with Major Butterfield

The latter officer, likewise, had not more bravery than he needed; and when, on the fifteenth, Forster approached and demanded the instant surrender of the fort, threatening the garrison with the tomahawks of the savages if compliance was refused, Butterfield made no show of resistance, and after a few hours delay, surrendered unconditionally.

Major Henry Sherburne, meanwhile, had been sent by Arnold from Montreal, with one hundred and forty men, to reinforce the garrison, but the cowardly Bedell "valuing safety more than fidelity and honor,"* refused to accompany him. Sherburne arrived upon the shores of Lake St. Louis (an expansion of the St. Lawrence), on the day of the surrender, but was unapprized of that event. He crossed the next day, and leaving forty men as guards for his boats, he pushed on toward the fort with one hundred men. They fell into an Indian ambuscade at about five o'clock in the evening, when a severe conflict of an hour ensued. The Indians, greatly superior in numbers, and aided by the Canadians, formed a cordon around the little band of republicans, and at a given signal, rushed upon and disarmed them. The furious savages—furious because some of their party had been slain in the conflict—butchered about twenty of the prisoners, and stripping the remainder almost naked, drove them in triumph to the fort, where they would have been all massacred had not Brant and Forster interposed. Fifty-eight Americans were killed, and the enemy lost twenty-two.

When Arnold heard of these disasters, he placed himself at the head of eight hundred men and marched against the enemy, to rescue the prisoners and chastise their captors. He arrived at St. Anne's on the afternoon of the twentieth, and distinctly saw the enemy conveying prisoners in batteaux to the south side of the St. Lawrence. At about the same time, a party of friendly Caughnawagas, whom he had sent to the hostile savages in the morning to demand a surrender of the prisoners, and to threaten them with extermination if they did not comply, returned with an answer of defiance. They brought not only this answer to Arnold, but a

* Gordon.

message from the Indians, telling him that if he should attempt to cross the river to effect the rescue of the prisoners, every one of them should be immediately put to death. This threat did not deter Arnold, and with a considerable force he proceeded to the island from which the prisoners had just been taken. There he found five of them, naked and half-starved, who informed him that the remainder had been taken to *Quinze Chiens*, four miles below. Arnold and his flotilla followed. A skirmish ensued, and as night was closing in, the republicans returned to St. Anne's and called a council-of-war.

At a little after midnight, Arnold received a flag from Forster, accompanied by a letter from Major Sherburne, who had been compelled, in order to save the lives of himself and fellow-captives, to sign a proposed cartel for the exchange of prisoners. Forster assured Arnold that if he persisted in his design to attack him, he could not restrain the savages, and they would certainly destroy all the prisoners. This cartel contained covenants that Arnold would not ratify without modifications; and one that required the captives to go immediately home, under an agreement not to serve again during the war, nor to give any information prejudicial to his majesty's service was rejected without discussion. An exchange and some minor stipulations were assented to; and Arnold agreed to send four captains as hostages for the faithful performance of the covenants. One of these was a brother of General Sullivan. Perceiving his peril, Forster acceded to Arnold's modifications, and the convention was signed. Arnold and his troops then returned to Montreal.

Forster's conduct in extorting the cartel by holding the bloody hatchet over the heads of his captives, was considered by all honorable men as disgraceful in the extreme, and Congress refused to ratify the capitulation, unless the British commander in Canada should deliver into their hands for punishment, "the authors, abettors, and perpetrators of the horrid murder committed on the prisoners." No doubt the humane Carleton viewed the conduct of Forster with disgust, for he soon afterward released the prisoners and sent the hostages home on parole.

General Sullivan was much disappointed on reaching Sorel, to find it almost utterly without military defences. He immediately commenced erecting a battery and constructing a fortified camp. Being informed that the enemy were intrenching at Three Rivers, half way between Quebec and Montreal, he detached Thompson, on the sixth of June, with two thousand men to join St. Clair in an attack upon them, if success should appear probable. These efficient movements seemed to reassure the peasantry around. "Our affairs here," wrote Sullivan, "have taken a strange turn since our arrival. The Canadians are flocking in by hundreds to take a part with us.... They have come in with great cheerfulness; and what gives greater evidence of their friendship is, that they have voluntarily offered to supply us with what wheat, flour, &c., we want, and ask nothing in return but certificates."* Not doubting the full success of Thompson and St. Clair, Sullivan expressed his determination to regain the post at Deschambault, so fortify it as to make it inaccessible, and then, driving the British fleet down the river, march upon and capture Quebec. "I venture to assure you and the Congress," he continued, "that I can, in a few days, reduce the army to order, and with the assistance of a kind Providence, put a new face to affairs here, which a few days since seemed almost impossible."

This cheering letter was but as a gleam of sunshine from behind a dark cloud just before the bursting of the tempest. It was extremely fallacious, and lifted the chalice of promise to the lips to be dashed to the earth in mockery a moment afterward. Sullivan often trusted too much to the good fortune of the hour, and did not send out his observations sufficiently in advance to gather data for his judgment to act upon. His vigilance seldom extended beyond the area of his own vision, and much that he should have known was often made manifest to his mind too late. At this time he was ignorant of the number of the enemy on the St. Lawrence, and operated upon a presumption that it was comparatively small. This misconception, and a strong desire to be appointed to the

* Sullivan to Washington, June 6, 1776.

office made vacant by the death of General Thomas, no doubt gave coloring to his hopes and assertions.

For a moment Sullivan's letter seemed like a ray of cheerful light from the North, but to the eye of the sagacious Washington, it appeared only auroral and quite as evanescent. Letters from Arnold and others, gave pictures of affairs there entirely different, and therefore Washington rested no hopes upon the sanguine statements of Sullivan. In reply, he advised him to receive with a proper degree of caution the professions which the Canadians might make. "They have the character," he said, "of an ingenious, artful people, and very capable of finesse and cunning. Therefore my advice is, that you put not too much in their power; but seem to trust them rather than actually do, too far."

It was obvious to Washington that Sullivan was aiming at the command in Canada, and in a guarded letter to Congress, enclosing a copy of the one from that officer, he said, in reference to his appointment: "Whether he merits it or not, is a matter to be considered; and that it may be considered with propriety, I think it my duty to observe, as of my own knowledge, that he is active, spirited, and zealously attached to the cause. That he does not want abilities, many members of Congress can testify; but he has his wants, and he has his foibles. The latter is manifested in his little tincture of vanity, and in an over-desire of being popular, which now and then lead him into embarrassments. His wants are common to us all. He wants experience to move upon a grand scale; for the limited and contracted knowledge which any of us have in military matters, stands in very little stead, and is greatly overbalanced by sound judgment, and some acquaintance with men and books, especially when accompanied by an enterprising genius, which, I must do General Sullivan the justice to say, I think he possesses. "But," Washington added, "as the security of Canada is of the last importance to the well-being of these colonies, I should like to know the sentiments of Congress respecting the nomination of any officer to that command." He preferred to leave the responsibility with the Congress.

CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL SCHUYLER AND HIS ENEMIES — WASHINGTON'S FRIENDSHIP — SCHUYLER'S TRIUMPHS — ALARMING INTELLIGENCE FROM CANADA — GATES SENT TO PHILADELPHIA — WASHINGTON SUMMONED THITHER — HANCOCK'S INVITATION — WASHINGTON'S INSTRUCTIONS TO PUTNAM — HIS ARRIVAL IN PHILADELPHIA WITH MRS. WASHINGTON — HIS INFLUENCE WITH CONGRESS — MEASURES ADOPTED — BOARD OF WAR ESTABLISHED — REINFORCEMENTS FOR CANADA — WASHINGTON RETURNS TO NEW YORK — SAD ACCOUNTS FROM CANADA — DISASTROUS DEFEAT OF THE REPUBLICANS AT THREE RIVERS — AMERICANS MADE PRISONERS — ADVANCE OF THE BRITISH ARMY — SULLIVAN'S RETREAT FROM SOREL — ARNOLD ABANDONS MONTREAL — REPUBLICAN ARMY AT ST. JOHN — PURSUIT BY THE BRITISH — CANADA ABANDONED — GATES IN COMMAND — CHARACTER OF THE INVASION.

On the same day when the commander-in-chief wrote to the Congress, asking them to determine who should be appointed to command the forces in Canada, that body expressed their determination, by resolving "that General Washington be directed to send Major-General Gates into Canada, to take the command of the forces in that province," but not to supersede General Schuyler.

The latter officer (whose eminent services, performed with unceasing assiduity, notwithstanding his almost constant sufferings from complicated bodily disorders, were highly appreciated by Washington) had lately been the subject of most wicked calumnies, and ungenerous and injurious suspicions. The antagonistic position in which he had been compelled to stand as a responsible and conscientious commander and good disciplinarian, toward the insubordinate troops from Connecticut and the New Hampshire grants, had created much bitter feeling toward him among these men; and they who had felt his rebukes and the justice of them, but were not generous enough to acknowledge their own sins against the necessary regulations imposed by a state of war, missed

no opportunity that offered to disparage him in the estimation of their countrymen.

When reverse after reverse clouded the horizon of the northern department, they attempted to make General Schuyler the scape-goat to bear away the odium of inefficiency, blundering, and wrong-doing, which properly belonged to themselves and associates, by falsely charging him with neglecting to send forward reinforcements and supplies to Canada, and construing his generous and politic treatment of Sir John Johnson,* while a spark of that man's honor remained, into complicity with the enemies of his country to ruin the republican cause. And when the alarm caused by the retreat of the shattered republican army from Quebec, spread over those portions of New England most exposed to invasion from the St. Lawrence, these false charges and dark insinuations were industriously circulated. In the New Hampshire grants, the home of the Green Mountain Boys who well knew the inflexible patriotism of General Schuyler, one hundred persons actually banded together to seize him as a tory; while on the borders of the same region the tories had conspired to murder him, or make him a captive, as the arch-rebel of the North!

Having a full consciousness of his own integrity and the faith of the people in general in his patriotism and rectitude, Schuyler paid very little attention to these things, until he perceived that they were making unfavorable impressions beyond his own immediate operations, and might prove injurious to the common cause. Then he indignantly stamped the calumnies as such, with most emphatic denunciations, and soon made his accusers ashamed and silent because of their meanness and dishonesty.

These slanders were eagerly propagated by the tories, because they thought them capital instruments for creating dissensions and distrust among the republican leaders, a method for weakening the opponents of the crown, which was employed at every period of

* "Our situation respecting the Indians is delicate and embarrassing. They are attached to Johnson, who is our enemy. Policy and prudence on the one hand suggest the necessity of seizing him and every friend of the government, on the other, if he is apprehended, there will be danger of incurring their resentment."—*Washington to Schuyler, Amboy, May* 22, 1776.

the war. They were borne upon the wings of rumor, and magnified by fear, after the alarming retreat from Quebec; and town and district committees passed resolves expressive of distrust of General Schuyler. Resolutions of this kind were sent to Washington and the provincial Congress of New York from King's district, but they were powerless, because the commander-in-chief and the Congress had perfect confidence in the calumniated patriot. Washington, who had been the depository of General Schuyler's heart-secrets, in public affairs, from the beginning, was filled with indignation, and sent copies of these papers to his friend on the twenty-first of May, saying:—

"From these you will readily discover the diabolical and insidious arts and schemes carrying on by the tories and friends of government, to raise distrust, dissensions, and divisions, among us. Having the utmost confidence in your integrity, and the most incontestable proof of your great attachment to our common country and its interests, I could not but look upon the charge against you with an eye of disbelief, and sentiments of detestation and abhorrence." He then informed him that copies of the papers, he was told, had been sent to different committees, and to Governor Trumbull.

Washington's letter was received by General Schuyler, at Fort George, on the evening of the twenty-seventh of May, and the next morning he replied to it, with feelings of gratitude toward the commander-in-chief, but with indignant words. He asked Washington to order a court of inquiry as soon as possible, to investigate the charges that had been made; "for," he said, "I can not sit easy under such an infamous imputation, since, on this extensive continent, numbers of the most respectable characters may not know what your excellency and Congress do of my principles and exertions in the common cause. It is peculiarly hard," he continued, "that at the very time that assassins and incendiaries are employed to take away my life and destroy my property, as being an active friend to my country—at the very time when I had taken measures and given orders, some of which are actually executed, to

secure the tories and to send them down to your excellency, a set of pretended whigs (for such they are that have propagated these diabolical tales), should proclaim me through all America a traitor to my country."*

Schuyler also wrote to the continental Congress on the subject, and said, "I have requested my General for an inquiry to be made into my conduct. His soul is above the meanness of suspicion, for his feelings are the most delicate; and although his opinion does me the most ample justice, yet it is a natural wish that my innocence should be made as public as the charge against me."†

It soon became evident that a court of inquiry concerning General Schuyler's conduct would be quite unnecessary, for those who at first believed the wicked reports, became convinced of their falsity. For example: the committee of Berkshire district, which, at the time of the alarm, had avowed their distrust of General Schuyler, assured Washington, that on investigation they were convinced that these suspicions were unfounded in truth. "We sincerely hope," they said, "his name may be handed down, with immortal honor, to the latest posterity, as one of the great pillars of the American cause."

Such alarming intelligence came from Canada at about this time, that Washington sent General Gates to Philadelphia, as his representative, to lay before the Congress sundry despatches from the North, and to make such verbal statements and suggestions as circumstances might seem to require. In a letter that Gates bore to the Congress, the commander-in-chief said: "I have requested General Gates to subjoin such hints of his own, as he may apprehend material. His military experience, and intimate acquaintance with the situation of our affairs, will enable him to give Congress the fullest satisfaction about the measures necessary to be adopted at this alarming crisis; and with his zeal and attachment to the cause of America, he will have a claim to their notice and favors." These expressions justified the action of the Congress three days before (the sixteenth of May), in promoting Gates to the rank

* Schuyler's MS. Letter Books. † Ibid.

and pay of major-general. At the same time they gave Colonel Thomas Mifflin the commission of brigadier-general; and on the same day, they resolved that the president should "write to General Washington, requesting him to repair to Philadelphia as soon as he can conveniently, in order to consult with Congress upon such measures as may be necessary for carrying on the ensuing campaign."*

In his letter to Washington, pursuant to this resolution, President Hancock urged him to come to Philadelphia as speedily as possible; and he invited the general and his lady to be his guests while they remained in the city, saying: "I have a bed at your service, and every endeavor on my part, and that of Mrs. Hancock's, will be exerted to make your abode agreeable. I reside in an airy, open part of the city, in Arch street, corner of Fourth street." This letter was received by Washington on the evening of the nineteenth, a few hours after Gates left for Philadelphia, and on the afternoon of the twenty-first, he departed for that city, accompanied by General Mifflin and his military family, Mrs. Washington and servants leaving in a chaise at the same time. The latter arrived at Philadelphia on the twenty-second;† but the general, who stopped at Amboy to view the ground there, and such places on Staten Island, contiguous to it, as might be proper for works of defence, did not arrive until about two o'clock on the twenty-third.‡

Before leaving New York, Washington gave special orders respecting movements there, in the event of an alarm; and General Putnam, the oldest major-general in the army at that post, was left in command during his absence. The commander-in-chief also gave the veteran some instructions concerning co-operation with

* Journals of Congress, May 16, 1776.

† While in Philadelphia, Mrs. Washington was inoculated for the small-pox. She had contemplated having the operation performed in New York. "Mrs. Washington is still here," the commander-in-chief wrote to his brother on the twenty-ninth of April, "and talks of taking the small-pox; but I doubt her resolution." At Philadelphia he wrote to the same gentleman, on the thirty-first of May, and said: "Mrs. Washington is now under inoculation in this city; and will, I expect, have the small-pox favorably. This is the thirteenth day, and she has very few pustules."

‡ Marshall's Diary.

the provincial Congress in a contemplated scheme for seizing tories and disaffected persons in the city, on Long Island, and the country round about, it having been ascertained that a plan had been formed for a junction between the loyalists of Connecticut and on Long Island, in order to join the ministerial army when it should arrive, "and oppress the friends of liberty in these colonies." The provincial Congress appointed a committee, sworn to secrecy, to act in the matter;* and as General Greene, who was then superintending the construction of a fortified camp near Brooklyn, would have a principal share in ordering detachments from the army for the purpose, he directed Putnam to communicate the whole plan to that officer, while it was to be kept a profound secret from all others.

Washington remained about a fortnight in Philadelphia; and his personal conferences with Congress were fruitful of good results. His presence there was regarded with hopefulness and delight by those ardent patriots who mourned over their tardy movements. Lee wrote from Charleston, when he heard of his being there, saying: "I am extremely glad, dear general, that you are in Philadelphia, for their councils sometimes lack a little of military electricity." It was even so; and the hesitancy of these civilians, sometimes caused the loss of victories that might have been won. Washington found a large portion of the Congress still hoping for reconciliation against all hope, and acting accordingly. "The representatives of whole provinces," he said, "are still feeding themselves upon the dainty food of reconciliation; and, though they will not allow that the expectation of it has any influence upon their judgment, with respect to their preparations for defence, it is but too obvious that it has an operation upon every part of their conduct, and is a clog to their proceedings. It is not in the nature of things to be otherwise."† Yet the Congress had just taken a most important step toward the absolute political independence of the colonies, which we will consider hereafter.

The Congress appeared to feel strengthened by the presence of

* Journals of the New York Provincial Congress, pages 937 to 940 inclusive.

† Letter to John Augustine Washington Philadelphia, thirty-first of May, 1776

the commander-in-chief, because they had confidence in his wisdom, prudence, and discretion; and on the day of his arrival, a committee of five members was appointed* to confer with him, Major-General Gates, and Brigadier-General Mifflin, "upon the most speedy and effectual means for supporting the American cause in Canada." That committee reported on the following day, and their suggestions were taken up and acted upon during several consecutive sittings of the Congress. Washington was also invited to the floor of the house, and the whole body of representatives had direct conferences with him. He told them as he had told the committee, that he was fully convinced, notwithstanding the approach of commissioners clothed with power to negotiate for reconciliation, that no accommodation would be proposed in terms that the colonists would accept, for the king and Parliament had resolved on the absolute submission of the republicans, or war; and had sent foreign mercenaries to carry on hostilities, if such measures should be found necessary. He believed a protracted war to be inevitable, and he earnestly besought the Congress to provide for the enlistment of soldiers for three years or during the war. He urged them to make provisions for a large permanent army, and to appoint a board of war with ample discretionary and executive powers to act quickly and vigorously. He represented New York as the most important point on the continent, at that moment; and he implored the Congress to use every effort to maintain the republican cause in Canada and to defend New York.

Washington's recommendations were speedily transmuted by the alchemy of legislative action, into laws in the form of resolutions. An augmented force, enlisted for three years, and a bounty of ten dollars for each new recruit, was resolved upon; and it was voted that the army in New York should be reinforced until the first of December following, with thirteen thousand eight hundred militia; and that fire-rafts and war-gondolas should be constructed, to prevent the passage of the Narrows by British battle-ships. Washing-

* The committee was composed of Benjamin Harrison, R. H. Lee, John Adams, James Wilson and Edward Rutledge.

ton was authorized to call upon the neighboring colonies for temporary aid with their militia, if necessary; and it was resolved that a flying camp of ten thousand men, to be furnished by Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, should be enlisted until the first of December, and stationed in the Jerseys for the aid and defence of the middle department. The Congress had already voted to employ two thousand Indians for service in Canada, if they could be procured; and on the first of June it was resolved by that body, that six thousand militia from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and New York, should be employed to reinforce the army in Canada. Assurances were sent by the Congress to the commanders in that province, that reinforcements and supplies should be forwarded, as they were "fully convinced of the absolute necessity of keeping possession of that country," and thought it "highly necessary that the exertions of the forces be particularly made on the St. Lawrence below the mouth of the Sorel," with a view of cutting off all communication between the upper country and the enemy.

On the thirteenth of June a committee of five was appointed, by the name of "The Board of War and Ordnance," to take the place of temporary committees on military affairs, hitherto raised when occasion required.* The duties of the board were to consist in obtaining and keeping an alphabetical register of all officers of the land forces in service, their rank and dates of commission; an exact account of all artillery and military stores; an account of the troops in the respective colonies; to forward all despatches for Congress to the colonies and the armies; to superintend the raising, fitting out and despatching all land forces, under the general direction of Congress; to have charge of all prisoners-of-war; and to keep correct copies, in books, of all the correspondence and despatches of the board. This was a measure of great importance.

* The members of the first board of war were, John Adams, Roger Sherman, Benjamin Harrison, James Wilson, and Edward Rutledge. Richard Peters was appointed secretary, and allowed "one or more clerks." The salary of the secretary was fixed at the rate of eight hundred dollars a year, and of the clerks, two hundred and sixty-six dollars and sixty-six cents. Peters was connected with the board of war until its new organization in 1781, under the Articles of Confederation, when he resigned, and received the thanks of Congress for his industry and fidelity.

or under the old system, military affairs had been managed with great irregularity.

Washington returned to New York on the sixth of June, where he found all quiet; but he was met by the most alarming intelligence from Canada. Rumors of the sad affair at the Cedars had reached him at Philadelphia. These were now officially confirmed; and letters from the North justified the indulgence of forebodings of greater evils on the St. Lawrence. To General Schuyler he said, "The situation of our affairs in Canada is truly alarming, and I greatly fear, from the intelligence transmitted from thence by Captain Wilkinson, in a letter to General Greene,* that ere this, we have sustained further and greater misfortunes than what had happened when you wrote.... I sincerely wish the next letters from the northward may not contain melancholy advices of General Arnold's defeat, and the loss of Montreal. The most vigorous exertions will be necessary to retrieve our circumstances there, and I hope you will strain every nerve for that purpose. Unless it can be now done, Canada will be lost for ever."

At this time despatches from General Schuyler, concerning the hostile movements of Sir John Johnson, already mentioned, reached Washington; and on the ninth, there came from Philadelphia a copy of a letter from the commissioners in Canada, setting forth the deplorable condition of the republican army there; and with it an order from the Congress, directing Washington to recall General Wooster from the northern army. The commander-in-chief at once put forth every effort in his power to send strength and encouragement to Sullivan; but at that moment, greater misfortunes than had yet fallen upon the republican army in Canada, were crushing it to the earth.

We left General Sullivan in cheerful mood, preparing a fortified camp at Sorel, while General Thompson was leading troops toward

* Captain James Wilkinson (afterward distinguished as a general in the armies of the United States), was with Arnold's detachment that marched to the relief of the garrison at the Cedars. He was then only twenty years of age. The letter alluded to was written at La Chien, at midnight, giving an account of the capture of Bedell's regiment and Sherburne's detachment at the Cedars, and anticipating an immediate attack upon Arnold's force.—See Wilkinson's Memoirs, i., 43.

Three Rivers, to attack the British advance guard under Colonel Maclean. That expedition proved disastrous, for General Burgoyne was at Three Rivers, with a large force of British regulars, accompanied by the gallant Fraser, who afterward fell at Saratoga. Ignorant of this overwhelming force, Thompson left the mouth of the Sorel with his little army, accompanied by Colonels Maxwell, Wayne, and Irvine, in fifty batteaux, and coasted along the southern shore of Lake St. Peter (an expansion of the river) to the mouth of the Nicolet, where he found St. Clair. A surprise of the enemy was concerted, and they all crossed the St. Lawrence in the night with the intention of falling upon the British before the dawn. The distance was greater than they had calculated, and it was almost daylight when they landed, nine miles above Three Rivers. They immediately pressed forward rapidly, but soon discovered that they had been led by a treacherous or ignorant guide, into a broad morass. They turned back and sought the proper road along the river, when, as the day dawned, they were discovered by the sentinels on the British shipping that lay in the adjacent waters.

An enfilading cannonade was now opened upon the republicans, and speaking trumpets were heard braying out from the fleet—"Land the troops! land the troops!" But the brave Thompson, still ignorant of the force that awaited him, pushed on toward the town, by a back way through the morass, with fifes playing and drums beating. To his great surprise he was confronted by a large force drawn up in battle order, under General Fraser. Meanwhile General Nesbit, with a considerable body of men, had gained the rear, so as to completely cut off their retreat to their boats; and Major Grant was stationed at a bridge over Des Loups river (one of the three*), to prevent their escape in that direction. A party was also ordered up the St. Lawrence, to destroy the boats which the republicans had left at their landing-place.

Still undismayed, General Thompson, after passing the morass, drew his troops up in battle order, and made a furious attack upon

* The St. Maurice river enters the St. Lawrence through three mouths, and the town established there was named Three Rivers, in consequence

the enemy. The republicans were instantly repulsed by a heavy fire, but did not suffer much loss, the balls passing over their heads. They were alarmed by the number of the enemy, and crowded back toward the morass in great confusion. Thompson tried to rally them, and had partially succeeded, when they were attacked in the rear by Nesbit. The route was now complete. They fled in all directions through the swamp. Twenty-five were slain; and General Thompson, Colonel Irvine, and about two hundred men, were made prisoners. After enduring terrible fatigue in thridding their way through the swamps, most of the fugitives reached the northern shore of Lake St. Peter. Major Woods, who was left in charge of the batteaux, had removed them to a secure place; and on the morning of the twelfth, the remnants of the broken army were conveyed in them across to the mouth of the Sorel, and were received into Sullivan's camp.

On the eighth of June, the hopeful Sullivan wrote to Washington, informing him of the progress of Thompson, and telling him that he had heard heavy cannonading in the direction of Three Rivers; also, that men who had come in small boats from below, reported that they had heard the firing of small arms for a long time. "I am almost certain," he said, "that victory has declared in our favor as the irregular firing of the cannon for such a length of time after the small arms ceased, shows that our men are in possession of the ground."

But these expectations were vain. Sullivan kept his despatch open until the twelfth, when he added the melancholy words: "I could not close the foregoing letter till I could get some certain intelligence of General Thompson and his party, most of which, after being unfortunately repulsed, are now returned." He then gave a brief account of the events connected with the attack and repulse, and added: "This, dear general, is a state of this unfortunate enterprise. What you will hear next I can not say. I am every moment informed of the vast numbers of the enemy which have arrived. Some, indeed, say that great numbers have arrived from England, and all the troops from Halifax. This I do not believe;

but I apprehend their numbers now are very great. I have here only two thousand five hundred and thirty-three, rank and file. Most of the officers seem discouraged, and, of course, their men. I am employed, day and night, in fortifying and securing my camp, and am determined to hold it as long as a person will stick by me."*

Immediately after the affair at Three Rivers, Sir Guy Carleton ordered a pursuit, and the whole British force, part on land and part on water, moved up the St. Lawrence as speedily as possible. Apprized of this movement, General Sullivan held a council-of-war on the fourteenth, when it was unanimously resolved to abandon Sorel and retreat to Chamblée. He at once dismantled his works, and withdrew. Soon after his rear division, under the Baron de Woedtke, had left the camp, the British fleet arrived at Sorel, and General Burgoyne disembarked with a strong force, and commenced a pursuit. The fleet came to anchor, instead of continuing up the Sorel, for the cautious Carleton, having had too many signal proofs of the courage, address, and rapidity of the Americans, was unwilling to penetrate the country too far while Arnold was at Montreal, and might cut off his retreat. "It was generally believed," said a contemporary British writer, "that if, instead of coming to anchor, General Carleton had continued the pursuit, which he might have done, as the wind was as favorable as it could possibly be, he would undoubtedly have arrived at Chamblée ten or twelve hours before General Sullivan, who was encumbered with cannon and baggage. In this case Sullivan would have been compelled to lay down his arms; General Arnold would have been intercepted at Montreal; and Ticonderoga, also, would have been taken, as no troops were stationed there for its defence."†

Arnold, meanwhile, was uninformed of the near approach of the enemy, and of the retreat of Sullivan. But he had timely notice. Captain Wilkinson (now Arnold's aid), who had been sent down the St. Lawrence in a batteau with despatches for Sullivan, met the

* Sparks's Revolutionary Correspondence, i., 218.

† History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War, by C. Stedman. London, 1794, vol. i., page 177.

British coming up. He immediately hastened back and gave Arnold the alarm at about six o'clock in the evening of the fifteenth. Preparations were immediately made to abandon Montreal.* The retreat was effected that night. Arnold crossed to Longueuiel with his little garrison of three hundred men, his baggage and arms, and Wilkinson pushed forward to Chamblée, to procure a detachment of troops from Sullivan to co-operate with the garrison in its retreat. At Chamblée all was confusion and fatigue, and Sullivan sent orders by Wilkinson, for the Baron de Woedtke to detach five hundred men from the rear division for that purpose. The Prussian general, who was seldom sober,† could

* When it became evident to Arnold that he must abandon Montreal, he seized goods belonging to merchants, under the pretence that they were intended for the use of the army. He gave certificates to the owners, and promised that they should be paid for their goods, according to invoices, by the Congress. But such was the haste in which much of the merchandise was removed, a few days before his retreat, that in many cases no certificates were given, and there remained no clue by which the owners might identify their property, if it should be found, except their names written upon packages. Arnold sent these goods to Chamblée, under the care of Major Scott, whom Wilkinson styles "a reduced officer of New Jersey," and ordered Colonel Hazen, then in command at Chamblée, to place them in store. Colonel Hazen was at personal variance with Arnold at that time, and professing to consider the goods as mere plunder, refused to have anything done with them. They lay exposed to the weather and to thieves, on the bank of the river, for some time, and many were lost or destroyed. The owners followed the army after its retreat, and demanded pay. Arnold was censured, and he cast the blame on Hazen. The latter was tried by a court-martial for disobedience of orders. On the trial, Major Scott's testimony was ruled out, on the ground that he was in complicity with Arnold in plundering the merchants at Montreal. Arnold sent a disrespectful letter to the court, which caused him to be called upon for an apology. This he refused in more offensive language. The court appealed to Gates, then in command in the North, and he took the responsibility of dissolving it, saying to the continental Congress, in extenuation: "The United States must not be deprived of that excellent officer's [Arnold's] services at this important moment." The court, however, acquitted Colonel Hazen, and thus virtually passed censure upon Arnold.

Wilkinson says (Memoirs, i., 58), that the goods were "conveyed across the lakes, and transported to Albany, where they were sold, General Arnold pocketing the proceeds." Justice to Arnold requires it to be stated, that this assertion is unsupported by proof; and the probabilities are in favor of the innocence of Arnold. I have before me an autograph letter of Arnold's, written at Montreal on the sixth of June, 1776, to General Schuyler, in which he says: "I am now removing a parcel of goods I have seized for the use of the army;" and another written to the same officer from St. John's, on the thirteenth, saying: "I wrote you a few days since from Montreal, that I had seized a parcel of goods for the use of the army, by particular orders from the commissioners of Congress," and then goes on to relate the circumstances of their conveyance to Chamblée, and the conduct of Colonel Hazen. He says: "Our hurry and confusion was so great, when the goods were received, it was impossible to take a particular account of them. Every man's name was marked on his particular packages, with the intention of taking a particular account of them at Chamblée or St. John, where the goods were ordered to be stored." Arnold also wrote to General Sullivan on the subject. These letters prove that he was not engaged in any secret manœuvre for his private benefit. He had active enemies in the army, and these, no doubt, were instrumental in giving the impression upon the public mind, that private gain was Arnold's motive.

† The Baron de Woedtke had been in the Prussian service many years, and had risen to the

not be found. The gallant Colonel Wayne, of the Pennsylvania line, assumed the responsibility of making the movement, and had marched about two miles in that direction, when a message came from Arnold, saying that he could easily escape to St. John by the way of Laprairie. Nothing but a calm, after the delay at Sorel, prevented the British fleet arriving at Longueuiel at the same hour when Arnold was crossing the river there. Had they done so, he and his whole force must been made prisoners-of-war.

After brief rest at Chamblée, Sullivan set everything on fire there that would burn, and retreated toward St. John, carrying with him baggage, stores, and artillery. These were dragged up the Chamblée rapids in one hundred batteaux, under the charge of a rear guard of five hundred men, commanded by Major Fuller. They were closely pursued by the enemy, but by skilful management the republicans kept them at bay.

On the seventeenth, the entire army remaining in Canada had collected at St. John, and Sullivan proposed making a defensive stand there. But the disheartened officers were generally opposed to the measure, and "upward of forty of them," said Sullivan in a letter to Schuyler, "begged leave to resign on the most frivolous pretences." Whole regiments were reduced to mere skeletons in numbers; and the soldiers having been made desperate by suffering and disappointment, hourly deserted.*

The broken army was rapidly dissolving; and all hopes of retaining Canada, or even of remaining in it, having now vanished, it was at once resolved to abandon the province and retreat to *Isle aux Noix*. This was accordingly done toward the evening of the same day, after breaking down bridges, and setting on fire buildings,

rank of major. He came to America in the spring of 1776, with strong letters of recommendation to Doctor Franklin, and Congress appointed him a brigadier-general. He appears to have been very intemperate. Wilkinson says, in relating the circumstances in question, that on inquiring for the baron, Colonel Allen, of the Pennsylvania line, said: "No doubt the beast is drunk, and in front of the army." Subordinate officers afterward complained of his 'ailing, to General Schuyler. He died at Lake George toward the close of July, and was buried with honors due to his rank.

* The small-pox had broken up all the regiments Arnold, in a letter to Schuyler, written on the thirteenth of June, at St. John, spoke of the troops as "sick, divided, ragged, undisciplined, and unofficered;" and said—"Doctor Stringer is in a disagreeable situation. Three thousand men are sick here and at Chamblée, and no room or conveniency for them."

vessels, and everything combustible that could not be carried away.

After the last boat but one had left the shore with the fugitive army, Arnold and a few officers mounted their horses and rode along the highway toward Chamblée. They soon met the advanced division of the British under General Burgoyne, when they galloped back to the landing-place. They then stripped and shot their horses, for they could not take them with them. The sun had gone down, and twilight was gathering over the scene of desolation which they were about to leave. The front of the enemy's column was in full view, and they stepped to the boat in which they were to escape. There they took an affectionate farewell of Colonel Louis, a faithful Caghnawaga chief, and the only Canadian who accompanied the army in its retreat from the province, and continued firm in his attachment to the republicans until the close of the war. "He cast a sorrowful look at the boat," says Wilkinson, "and retired precipitately into the adjacent forest. General Arnold then ordered all hands on board, and resisting my proffers of service, pushed off the boat with his own hands, and thus indulged the vanity of being the last man who embarked from the shores of the enemy."*

Arnold overtook the army at midnight, and on the following day (eighteenth of June), they were all encamped upon *Isle aux Noix*. That being a low, unhealthful place, and the sickness among the troops increasing, Sullivan advanced to *Isle la Motte*, and there awaited orders from his superiors. General Schuyler was then at Albany, and directed General Sullivan to continue his retreat up the lake and take post at Crown Point. This was effected before the close of the month; and as the republicans had complete command of Lake Champlain, Burgoyne did not continue his pursuit beyond St. John.†

* Wilkinson's Memoirs, i., 55.

† It was the opinion of some, that the British might have overtaken the republicans in their retreat from Sorel, but that it was the policy of General Carleton to drive them out of Canada, not to make them prisoners. Wilkinson says he was informed by an officer of the forty-seventh British grenadiers, at Saratoga, that after the affair at Three Rivers, he asked permission of Carleton to cut off the retreat of a detachment of Thompson's force, that might have easily been done.

At Crown Point the brave and active, but now disappointed Sullivan, met General Gates, who, though a junior officer, had, on the seventeenth of the month, been appointed to the command in Canada by the Congress. This was the first intimation that Sullivan had received of his appointment, and his sensitive spirit, made more tender by recent reverses, was deeply wounded. He left the northern department in disgust, and joined Washington at New York early in July.

This was the end of the invasion of Canada, which, viewed in all its features, was one of the most remarkable military movements on record. The progress of Montgomery in the midst of desperate obstacles — the expedition of Arnold across the wilderness — the siege of Quebec — the maintenance of the blockade — the obstinate persistence in keeping possession of the country — and the final retreat, which, General Schuyler said, was "conducted with prudence and discernment, and reflected honor upon the commanders" — each of these presents boldness of conception, skill and indomitable perseverance in execution, and wonderful fortitude in endurance, which command our veneration. And all these operations were performed by half-disciplined and oftentimes half-mutinous troops, unaccustomed to the state of war, illy clad and provisioned, in a strange country during the most inclement seasons of the year, and in the face of a superior force at every step. Everything was well planned; and had supplies of men, money, and the munitions of war, been as promptly furnished as the army had a right to expect, and had all who embarked in the enterprise been faithful to the trust reposed in them until the end, Canada would, doubtless, have been one of the United Colonies that were declared free and independent states only a few days after that province was abandoned by the republicans.

when the general replied: "What would you do with them? Have you spare provisions for them? or would you send them to Quebec to starve? No, let the poor creatures go home, and carry with them a tale which will serve his majesty more effectually than their capture."

CHAPTER XII.

WASHINGTON'S EXPECTATIONS — CONSOLATIONS RESPECTING CANADA — PREPARATIONS FOR THE DEFENCE OF NEW YORK — FORTIFICATIONS IN THE HIGHLANDS — STIRLING'S REPORT — KING'S BRIDGE DEFENCES — WORKS NEAR BROOKLYN — GENERAL GREENE THERE — FLYING CAMP — TORY CONSPIRACY IN NEW YORK — ITS DISCOVERY AND DEFEAT — A LIFE-GUARDSMAN HANGED — THE LIFE GUARD — WASHINGTON'S COOLNESS — ARRIVAL OF GENERAL HOWE AND BRITISH TROOPS — HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE TORIES — WASHINGTON'S ANXIETY AND EFFORTS — THE GATHERING STORM — APPEALS TO CONGRESS AND THE TROOPS — A FORMIDABLE ARMAMENT BEFORE NEW YORK.

"We expect a very bloody summer at New York and Canada," wrote Washington to his brother, on the thirty-first of May; "as it is there I presume the grand efforts of the enemy will be aimed; and I am sorry to say that we are not either in men or arms prepared for it. However, it is to be hoped, that, if our cause be just, as I do most religiously believe it to be, the same Providence which has in many instances appeared for us, will still go on to afford its aid."

A month later, as we have seen, the republicans were driven out of Canada, and the anticipated flow of blood in that quarter was prevented. The president of Congress, in a private letter to Washington, congratulated him on the good fortune that attended the retreat from that province, when "baggage, cannon, ammunition, and sick," were kept from the enemy's hands; and the commander-in-chief found consolation in the same reflections. "Canada, it is certain, would have been an important acquisition," he said, "and well worth the expenses incurred in the pursuit of it. But as we could not reduce it to our possession, the retreat of our army with so little loss, under such a variety of distresses, must be esteemed

a most fortunate event."* During the remainder of the season the chief operations of the army in the north were defensive; and efforts to prevent an invasion resulted in success.

New York, meanwhile, had become the great object of solicitude to the republicans, for it was evident, before the close of May, that a land and naval force, under General and Admiral Howe, would make that city and Hudson's river their principal theatre of operations at the opening of the summer campaign. Additional measures were accordingly taken to place these points in a state of proper defence. As we have already observed, the Congress had voted over thirteen thousand men to reinforce the army in New York; and the commander-in-chief pushed forward and strengthened the fortifications on Manhattan islands and in the highlands, as vigorously as possible.

In addition to Fort Constitution, erected opposite West Point, in the autumn of 1775, the provincial Congress of New York had, early in January, 1776, ordered the construction of a fortress on the point of land at the mouth of Poplopen's creek, opposite the high promontory of Anthony's Nose, at the lower entrance to the highlands. The ground was staked out in February, by Captain Smith, an engineer; and he also marked out the ground for another fortification, five hundred yards east of Fort Constitution, that "commanded the passage up and down the river, and secured West Point." The former was named Fort Montgomery in honor of the hero who fell at Quebec; and its construction was carried on so rapidly that it was ready for a garrison early in May.

While Washington was in Philadelphia at the close of May, Lord Stirling, by his command, visited and inspected the highland fortifications. He reported to the chief that Fort Montgomery was garrisoned by three companies of Colonel James Clinton's regiment, about two hundred in number, rank and file, and that he regarded it as a capital guard-post. Fort Constitution was garrisoned by two companies of the same regiment, and Captain Wisner's company of Orange county minute-men, in all about one

* Washington to President Hancock, June 30, 1776.

hundred and sixty, rank and file. Both garrisons were feebly armed; and at the time of Stirling's visit, the works were incomplete. But captive tories were at labor upon them, under the direction of the committees of Albany, Duchess, and Westchester, and they were soon made strong and promising. Stirling recommended the construction of a redoubt upon West Point as needful, "not only for the preservation of Fort Constitution, but for its own importance;" and at his suggestion, Colonel James Clinton, of Orange county, one of the noblest patriots engaged in the war, was placed in command of both posts on the fourteenth of June, and of all troops stationed in that vicinity.

As early as May the previous year, the New York provincial Congress, considering King's bridge, at the upper end of Manhattan island, a very important point, had ordered the construction of a redoubt there, to guard that communication between New York and the main land; and General Lee had recommended the erection of fortifications upon the adjacent heights. Soon after his return from Philadelphia, Washington rode out to King's bridge, personally inspected every elevation in that vicinity, and ordered extensive works to be laid out upon a commanding eminence (afterward called Mount Washington), about two miles south of King's bridge, which overlooks both the Hudson and Harlem rivers. He also directed other works to be constructed in that vicinity, and at King's bridge, which we shall consider hereafter. At the same time General Greene, who, as a military leader and tactician, proved himself, before the close of the war, to be quite equal to the commander-in-chief, had been actively engaged in the preparation of defensive works on Long Island, opposite the city of New York. He made his headquarters at Brooklyn, and with that industry and vigilance for which he was so remarkable, he soon comprehended the whole ground. He carefully studied the field of operations; explored every wood, and road, and by-way; and ordered the immediate construction of proper works upon eligible heights and important passes, by which the approach of an enemy toward New York, by way of the island, might be disputed.

These works had for their centre a strong fortification upon an eminence overlooking the East river, and named Fort Putnam. It was subsequently called Fort Greene, and upon its site the fine walks and green sward of Washington square are now laid.

On the fifth of June, Doctor Hugh Mercer, of Virginia, who had seen service at Culloden as assistant surgeon, thirty-one years before, and had campaigned with Washington in the French and Indian war, was commissioned a brigadier, and appointed to the command of the flying camp of ten thousand militia, just ordered to be raised by the continental Congress. He made his headquarters at Amboy, in New Jersey, but it was late in July before a sufficient number of recruits had been collected there to act with efficiency. Meanwhile the recruiting service for augmenting the army at New York was going on in that and adjacent colonies, although not very actively; yet at the close of June, Washington's force, prepared for service, was so formidable, that toryism was almost silent. The British ships-of-war had withdrawn from the harbor and cast anchor between Staten Island and Sandy Hook; and the arrival of the expected land and naval forces, under the brothers Howe, was anxiously awaited for, by both parties.

Although the loyalists were less bold and openly active than they had been, they were preparing plans in secret most perilous to the republican leaders and their cause. Feeling confident that the British force expected would be ample in numbers and strength to re-establish royal authority in New York, they prepared, under the direction of Governor Tryon, who was yet a resident in the ship *Duchess of Gordon*, to co-operate with the troops and share in the triumphs that would ensue. What were their particular plans in detail, and how they were to be carried out, were never fully developed; but sufficient became known before the time for action had arrived, to cause their defeat, and to place the signet of darkest infamy upon the leaders in the scheme, for the murder of Washington and his officers was a prominent feature in their hellish plot!

Washington and his military family were occupants of the Rich-

mond Hill mansion at this time. Mrs. Washington also remained with him, but Mr. and Mrs. Custis were at the home of the latter in Maryland. Colonel Reed, who, at Washington's request, had been appointed adjutant-general of the army on the fifth of June, had just arrived at headquarters. Richard Carey and Samuel B. Webb were the aids-de-camp of the commander-in-chief, each having the rank of lieutenant-colonel; and his secretary, Colonel Harrison, was assisted by Major Harrison. The latter had been appointed to fill the place of Aaron Burr, who, for a fortnight, had occupied that position, and had then exchanged it for that of aid-de-camp to General Putnam. The house, as we have observed, was delightfully situated out of the city, near the bank of the Hudson; and a picked corps called the commander-in-chief's guard, were on duty around it night and day.

At about the middle of June, the town and the camp were filled with rumors of a foul conspiracy. It was alleged that, on the arrival of the British fleet, the tories were to rise, full-armed, to co-operate with the ministerial forces; that King's bridge was to be destroyed, so as to cut off all communication with the main land, and the cannon there to be spiked by the Westchester tories; that the magazines were to be fired, and Washington and his staff to be murdered, or seized and given up to the enemy. The finger of rumor also pointed at many residents of the city, and of Long and Staten islands, as conspirators. Among these were the proprietors of the most prominent drinking-houses in the city; and the tavern of Corbie, situated "southeast of General Washington's house, to the westward of Bayard's woods, and north of Lispenard's meadows" (near the intersection of the present Spring and Wooster streets), was designated as the general rendezvous of the conspirators, where, it was said, Gilbert Forbes, a blacksmith, "enlisted men, gave them money, and swore them on the book to secrecy." It was also alleged, that from this house a correspondence was kept up with Governor Tryon, on the *Duchess of Gordon*, through "a mulatto-colored negro, dressed in blue clothes."

These rumors were so generally believed, that the provincial

Congress of New York appointed Philip Livingston, John Jay, and Gouverneur Morris, a committee of investigation. This committee traced the plot up to Governor Tryon, who, from his secure retreat, was acting through agents on shore, among the most prominent of whom was David Mathews, the mayor of the city, who, it was alleged, had paid money to enlist men, purchase arms, and corrupt the continental soldiery. It was stated before the committee, that Governor Tryon had offered five guineas bounty to each man who should enter the king's service, with a promise of two hundred acres of land for himself, one hundred for his wife, and fifty for each child. Some of Washington's Life Guard were charged with complicity in the scheme for murdering him; and it was alleged that members of the guard had been tampered with at Corbie's country tavern.

The investigating committee were satisfied of the general truth of these statements; and they authorized and requested General Washington to cause the arrest of Mayor Mathews, and the seizure of his papers. The mayor's residence was at Flatbush, on Long Island, about a mile and a half from the encampment of General Greene, near Brooklyn. To that officer Washington intrusted the execution of the arrest; and at one o'clock in the morning of the twenty-second of June, a detachment from Greene's brigade surrounded Mathew's house, and secured his person, but no papers were found. Many other arrests were made on the same day, and great alarm seized the tories who were engaged in the plot. Many of them on Long Island and Staten Island concealed themselves in the woods, or other safe retreats.

Forbes, the gunsmith, "a short, thick man, with a white coat," whose place of business was on Broadway, near the Bowling Green, was arrested on the same day. He refused to make any disclosures, and was sent to jail in irons. Early the next morning, a son of Philip Livingston visited him; told him he was grieved to find he had been concerned, and as his time was short, not having above three days to live, advised him to prepare himself. This had the desired effect. Forbes asked to be taken before the Congress

again; and there he made such disclosures, that between twenty and thirty other persons in the city were immediately arrested. Among these were Thomas Hickey, a member of Washington's Life Guard, and Johnson, a fifer, and Greene, a drummer of the same corps, who, it afterward appeared, had been corrupted by Hickey.

One Bowen, who was suspected, testified before the committee that he had heard, in company, that several of the Life Guard had deserted, and that others were uneasy and weary of the service, and would go on board the *Duchess of Gordon* if they could. Forbes confessed that the mayor had paid him one hundred and forty pounds sterling, for weapons, by order of Governor Tryon; and Mathews himself admitted the charge, but said he had paid the money with reluctance, and had told the gunsmith that he would be hanged, if found out. He also confessed that he had been cognizant of attempts to enlist tories and corrupt the commander-in-chief's guards, but solemnly averred that he had discountenanced them. It also appeared in evidence, that the conspirators had corrupting agents up the Hudson river, some distance above the highlands. James Haff, of Fishkill, Duchess county, confessed before the committee of safety, at Cornwall, that he was one of a number who were to join the British on their arrival—their first movement to be to spike all the cannon in the newly-erected redoubts in the highlands. And a meeting of committees in the Newburgh precinct, addressed a letter to Colonel James Clinton, informing him that persons dangerous to the cause were lurking in that neighborhood, and requesting him to send a detachment, "to aid in getting some of these rascals apprehended and secured."

Hickey and his associates of the guard, were arrested immediately after dinner, on the twenty-third; and, according to a letter written at New York the next day, "the general's housekeeper was taken up," on suspicion of being an accomplice. She was the daughter of Samuel Fraunces, a noted innkeeper at that time, at whose house (yet standing), on the corner of Broad and Pearl streets, in New York, Washington took an affectionate farewell of

his officers, near the close of 1783. It was chiefly on the testimony of this woman that Hickey was arrested, tried, and condemned. He was a dark-complexioned Irishman, and had been a deserter from the British army several years before. He had lived in Wethersfield, Connecticut, where he bore a good character, and was selected for the guard from Knowlton's Connecticut rangers. He had the confidence of the commander-in-chief, and was a favorite at Richmond Hill. Having enlisted in the conspiracy, to him was intrusted the work of destroying Washington. He first corrupted the fifer and drummer of the corps; and, having resolved to *poison* the commander-in-chief, he next approached the housekeeper, with whom he was on good terms. He made her his confidant, and she, pretending to favor his views, became a co-conspirator, but with patriotic intentions.

Washington was very fond of green peas, and it was agreed that when a dish of them was ready for the general's table, Hickey should put the poison in it. Meanwhile the housekeeper disclosed the plot to the general. The peas were poisoned. Washington made some excuse for sending the dish away, and Hickey was soon afterward arrested. The peas were given to some hens, in his presence, when they immediately sickened and died.* The guardsman was tried by a court-martial, and, on the testimony of the housekeeper and one of the corps, whom the culprit had unsuccessfully attempted to corrupt, he was found guilty of "mutiny and sedition, and of holding a treacherous correspondence with the enemies of the colonies," and was sentenced to be hanged. That sentence was carried into speedy execution. Washington ordered the provost-marshal to perform the duty on the twenty-eighth of June, "at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, upon the ground between the encampments of the brigades of Brigadier-General Spencer and Lord Stirling." In a letter dated "New York, July first, 1776," an eye-witness of the execution wrote as follows: "Last Friday,

* These facts were related to a friend of the writer (Mr. W. J. Davis), by the late Peter Embury, of New York, who resided in the city at the time, was well acquainted with the general's housekeeper, and was present at the execution of Hickey.

in the forenoon, was executed in a field, between the Colonels McDougall and Huntington's camp, near the Bowery lane (in the presence of near twenty thousand spectators), a soldier belonging to his Excellency General Washington's guard, for mutiny and conspiracy, being one of those who formed, and was soon to have put in execution, that horrid plot of assassinating the staff officers, blowing up the magazines, and securing the passes of the town, on the arrival of the hungry ministerial myrmidons." The place of execution was not far from the intersection of the present Grand and Chrystie streets, a little eastward of the Bowery. It is a singular fact, that the victim of this the *first military execution in the continental army* was a member of the body guard of the commander-in-chief, who were chosen for their supposed trustworthiness!*

* The commander-in-chief's guard was organized in the spring of 1776. On the eleventh of March (a few days before the termination of the siege of Boston), he ordered a corps to be formed, of *reliable* men as guard for himself, baggage, etc. He directed them to be chosen from various regiments, specifying their height to be "from five feet eight inches, to five feet ten inches, and to be handsomely and well made." The corps consisted of a major's command—one hundred and eighty men; and Caleb Gibbs, of Rhode Island, was appointed its first chief, with the title of captain-commandant, and having three lieutenants. A new organization of the guard took place at the close of April, 1777, when Washington was at Morristown, in New Jersey. On the thirtieth of that month he issued the following circular to the colonels of regiments stationed there:—

"SIR: I want to form a company for my guard. In doing this, I wish to be extremely cautious, because it is more than probable that, in the course of the campaign, my baggage, papers, and other matters of great public import, may be committed to the sole care of these men. This being premised, in order to impress you with proper attention in the choice, I have to request that you will immediately furnish me with four men of your regiment; and, as it is my further wish that this company should look well, and be nearly of a size, I desire that none of the men may exceed in stature five feet ten inches, nor fall short of five feet nine inches—sober, young, active, and well made. When I recommend care in your choice, I would be understood to mean, of good character in the regiment—that possess the pride of appearing clean and soldierlike. I am satisfied there can be no absolute security for the fidelity of this class of people; but yet I think it most likely to be found in those who have family connections in the country. You will, therefore, send me none but natives. I must insist that, in making this choice, you give no intimation of my preference of natives, as I do not want to create any invidious distinction between them and the foreigners."

At this time the number of the Guard was considerably increased, and a part of them were mounted as cavalry. Caleb Gibbs was yet the captain-commandant, and remained in that position until near the close of 1779, when he was succeeded by William Colfax, one of his lieutenants.

Their uniform, according to the late G. W. P. Custis, Esq. (the adopted son of Washington), consisted of a blue coat, with white facings; white waistcoat and breeches; black stock and black half-gaiters, and a round hat, with blue and white feather. This description exactly corresponds with the device on a flag that belonged to the cavalry of the Guard, which is preserved in the museum at Alexandria, and of which I have a drawing. The flag is made of white silk, on which the device is neatly painted. One of the guard is seen holding a horse, and is in the act of receiving a flag from the genius of Liberty, who is personified as a woman leaning upon the Union shield, near which is the American eagle. The motto of the corps, "CONQUER OR DIE," is upon a rib-

Washington appeared to regard this whole matter with great coolness. In a letter to the president of Congress, written in the morning, just previous to the execution of Hickey, he said: "No regular plan seems to have been digested; but several persons have been enlisted and sworn to join the conspirators. The matter, I am in hopes, by a timely discovery, will be suppressed and put a stop to. Many citizens and others, among whom is the mayor, are now in confinement. The matter has been traced up to Governor Tryon; and the mayor appears to have been a principal agent between him and the persons concerned in it." In the afternoon Washington issued a general order, saying: "The unhappy fate of Thomas Hickey, executed this day for mutiny, sedition, and treachery, the general hopes will be a warning to every soldier in the army, to avoid those crimes, and all others so disgraceful to the character of a soldier, and pernicious to his country."*

The discovery of this conspiracy was indeed timely, for before the investigating committee had completed their labors, and Hickey had expiated his crime upon the gallows, British ships-of-war appeared off Sandy Hook. On the twenty-fifth, the frigate *Greyhound* arrived within the Narrows, bearing General Howe and suite on board, and accompanied by two other ships-of-war. The general had come in advance of the fleet that bore his army, in order to consult with Governor Tryon, and ascertain the position of affairs at New York. Tryon, and several leading tories that were on

and. Care was always taken to have each state from which the continental army was supplied with troops, represented by members of this corps. It was the duty of the infantry portion to guard the headquarters, and to insure the safekeeping of the papers and effects of the commander-in-chief, as well as the safety of his person. The mounted portion accompanied the general in his marches and in reconnoitring, or other like movements. They were employed as patrols, videttes, and bearers of the general's orders to various military posts; and they were never spared in battle.

The corps varied in number at different periods. At first, as we have observed, it consisted of one hundred and eighty men. During the winter of 1779–'80, when the American army, under Washington, was cantoned at Morristown, in close proximity to the enemy, it was increased to two hundred and fifty. In the spring it was reduced to its original number; and in 1783, the last year of service, it consisted of sixty-four non-commissioned officers and privates.

The last survivor of the guard was Sergeant Uzal Knapp, of New Windsor, Orange county, New York, who died there on the eleventh of January, 1856. Five days afterward, his body was buried at the foot of the flag-staff in front of Washington's headquarters, at Newburgh. It is a most appropriate burial-place for the mortal remains of the veteran guardsman.

* From Washington's Orderly-Book, June 28, 1776.

board the *Duchess of Gordon*, gave Howe great encouragement; and in a letter to Lord George Germain, written on the seventh of July, the latter said, after speaking of the joy expressed by the loyal inhabitants on Staten Island, on his arrival: "There is great reason to expect a numerous body of the inhabitants to join the army from the province of York, the Jerseys, and Connecticut, who, in this time of universal oppression, only wait for opportunities to give proofs of their loyalty and zeal." Tryon, also, wrote—"The testimony of the inhabitants of this [Staten] island, of loyalty to his majesty, and attachment to his government, I flatter myself will be general throughout the province, as soon as the army gets the main body of the rebels between them and the sea."

For three or four days after Howe's arrival, armed vessels kept coming; and, on the twenty-eighth, Washington was informed by Lieutenant Davidson, of the sloop-of-war *Schuyler*, that from some prisoners he had just taken, he learned that a British fleet of one hundred and thirty sail left Halifax for New York, on the ninth of June, with Howe's army and large reinforcements. This intelligence disturbed the commander-in-chief, for the enlistments had been very tardy; and on the same day Washington said, in a letter to the president of Congress: "I could wish General Howe and his armament not to arrive yet, as not more than a thousand militia have come in, and our whole force, including the troops at all the detached posts, and on board the armed vessels, which are comprehended in our returns, is but small and inconsiderable, when compared with the extensive lines they are to defend, and, most probably, the army that he brings."

On the following day the main body of the British fleet arrived, and the troops were immediately landed on Staten Island. Expecting an attack speedily, Washington issued a general order on that day, expressing a hope that all soldiers intrusted with the defence of any work would behave with coolness, and not throw away their fire. He recommended them to load for their first fire with one musket-ball and four or eight buckshot, according to the size and strength of their pieces. The brigadiers were ordered to mark a

circle around the several redoubts, with small brush, and to direct the men not to fire until this circle should be reached by the enemy.

Day after day the gathering storm of war that hung around Staten island, grew more and more portentous, and Washington beheld its menaces with great anxiety, because the strength of his army was so inadequate to the task of defending his extensive line of operations against a foe so numerous and well disciplined. He knew that Admiral Howe was expected with a powerful fleet to co-operate with the hostile army, and that General Howe was only waiting for that arrival to make a proposition for reconciliation that must, of necessity, be rejected by the Americans, and then to commence military operations with vigor. Every day's delay was a precious boon for the republicans, and with tireless energy, the commander-in-chief made preparations for the inevitable contest. He urged the continental Congress, whose counsels had lately been directed to the consideration of most important political questions, to put forth all their strength in support of the army, for its needs were imminent; and be implored them to take measures for the immediate creation of the promised flying-camp, and to call upon Massachusetts for the several continental regiments there, to augment the army at New York.

To the troops under his command, Washington made the most earnest and encouraging appeals. "The time is now near at hand," he said, in general orders on the second of July, "which must probably determine whether Americans are to be freemen or slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own; whether their houses and farms are to be pillaged and destroyed, and they consigned to a state of wretchedness, from which no human efforts will probably deliver them. The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this army. Our cruel and unrelenting enemy leaves us no choice, but a brave resistance or a most abject submission. This is all that we can expect. We have, therefore, to resolve to conquer or die. Our own country's honor calls upon us for a vigorous and

manly exertion, and if we now shamefully fail, we shall become infamous to the whole world. Let us rely upon the goodness of the cause, and the aid of the Supreme Being, in whose hands victory is, to animate and encourage us to great and noble actions. The eyes of all our countrymen are now upon us, and we shall have their blessings and praises, if happily we are the instruments of saving them from the tyranny meditated against them. Let us animate and encourage each other, and show the whole world, that a freeman contending for liberty on his own ground is superior to any slavish mercenary on earth. The general recommends to the officers great coolness in time of action, and to the soldiers, a strict attention and obedience, with a becoming firmness and spirit." He concluded by giving assurances of rewards for courage and obedience, and threatening punishment to those who should behave ill, the "general being resolved, as well for the honor and safety of the country, as of the army, to show no favor to such as refuse or neglect to do their duty at so important a crisis."

The whole force under General Howe had arrived early in July, and on the eighth he landed nine thousand men upon Staten Island in the vicinity of the quarantine ground within the Narrows. They encamped upon the neighboring hills, and there awaited the arrival of Admiral Howe with English regulars and German hirelings. These arrived in the course of a few days, and at about the same time Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Parker, with their broken forces, came from the South and joined them. By the middle of July, the wooded heights of Staten Island, above Stapleton and Clifton, and the English transports in the adjacent waters, contained almost thirty thousand armed men, ready, at command, to fall upon the republicans.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REVOLUTION IN THE SOUTH — GENERAL LEE'S APPARENT OMNIPRESENCE — HIS WATCHFULNESS OF CLINTON'S MOVEMENTS — HIS OPERATIONS AT WILLIAMSBURG — GOVERNOR EDEN — ARRIVAL OF PARKER AND CORNWALLIS IN THE CAPE FEAR RIVER — JUNCTION WITH CLINTON — PETTY SPITE OF THE INVADERS — ARCH-REBELS OF NORTH CAROLINA — DEPARTURE OF CLINTON AND HIS FORCES — FIRMNESS OF THE PATRIOTS — THEIR VIGILANCE AND ACTIVITY — END OF ROYAL POWER IN SOUTH CAROLINA — CHARLESTON FORTIFIED — CHANGES IN CIVIL GOVERNMENT — RUTLEDGE AND HIS ASSOCIATES — APPROACH OF THE BRITISH INVADERS — PREPARATIONS FOR THEIR RECEPTION — ARRIVAL OF LEE AT CHARLESTON — TARDINESS OF THE BRITISH — ATTACK ON FORT SULLIVAN — THE GARRISON — LEE'S UNEASINESS — MOVEMENTS OF LAND TROOPS — SEVERE NAVAL ENGAGEMENT — PERSONAL EXPLOITS — THE AMERICANS VICTORIOUS — RETREAT OF THE ENEMY — EFFECTS OF THE VICTORY.

In the far South where the flowers bloom in winter and trees blossom in early March, the onward movement of revolution was strong and steady. The victory at Moore's Creek bridge had given it a powerful impulse, not only in North Carolina, but over all the southern regions; and the white sails of a hostile fleet that appeared off Cape Fear in May, awakened no terror among the republican planters, for they trusted in God, in the righteousness of their cause, and in their own strong arms. They flocked to the standards of their leaders with alacrity; and at the time when the republicans were fleeing from Canada, their compatriots below the Roanoke were chanting songs of triumph, for they had driven a ministerial fleet and army from the Carolina coasts.

We have already spoken of the brief, friendly interview between Sir Henry Clinton and Governor Tryon, in the harbor of New York, early in February, and the speedy departure of the former, with his ships and soldiers, for the southern coasts. We have also

alluded to the departure from Britain of a military and naval armament under the respective commands of Lord Cornwallis and Sir Peter Parker, destined for the same coasts, to co-operate with Sir Henry in maintaining the royal cause there. And we have seen that before the final destination of Clinton or the preparations of Parker's fleet were known to the Americans, General Lee was sent to New York to watch the movements of the former. He was there just in time to frighten Sir Henry away; and soon afterward, having been appointed to the chief command in the southern department, we find him in Virginia, interrupting friendly intercourse near Norfolk, between the baronet and Governor Dunmore, and frustrating hostile plans against the coasts of the Old Dominion. To Sir Henry, in his southward voyage, Lee appeared to be omnipresent; and when, in May, Lord Cornwallis landed some troops upon the shores of Cape Fear, in Brunswick, and desolated the plantations of Colonel Robert Howe and some of his whig neighbors, under the guidance of tories, the alert Lee, making his way in that direction, interrupted the sport.

Lee was at Williamsburg, in Virginia, early in April. There he found much food for his censorious spirit, in the timidity of public men, and the tardy preparations for war. "I am sorry to grate your ears with a truth," he said in a letter to Washington on the fifth of April, "but must, at all events, assure you that the provincial Congress of New York are angels of decision, when compared with your countrymen, the committee of safety assembled at Williamsburg." He named some honorable exceptions, and then proceeded to speak of the Virginia forces. He found the regiments generally complete in numbers, and composed of fine-looking men, but they were wretchedly furnished with the necessary implements of war. He was extremely anxious to attack Dunmore and his hordes in the Elizabeth river. "Had I only eight eighteen-pounders," he said, "I would immediately, at all events, take post on Craney island," which commanded the Elizabeth river and Hampton roads, but they could not be procured. Yet, undismayed, he pushed forward preparations to drive the enemy from the vicinity

of Norfolk. "If I succeed," he said, "I shall come in for a sprig of laurel."—"This essential measure," he continued, "might have been effected long ago, but the same apathy and oblique squinting toward what the milk-and-water people call reconiliation, the prodigious flattering prospect opened by the appointment of commissioners, were strong arguments against the expense of gun-carriages and intrenching tools."

Lee had just despatched this letter when Captain James Barron arrived at Williamsburg, with an intercepted communication from the British colonial secretary to Governor Eden, of Maryland, informing him of the armament in preparation for the Virginia or Carolina coasts. Barron found the despatch on board of a small vessel he had captured, which had been sent by Lord Dunmore to Annapolis to convey it. It was laid before Lee and the committee of safety at Williamsburg, and the former wrote immediately to the chairman of the committee of safety at Baltimore, recommending the seizure of the person and papers of Governor Eden, as one who was holding treasonable correspondence with the enemy. He also directed him, in his name, to employ the regular troops at Annapolis for the purpose, if necessary.

Maryland was then quite conservative, and Eden was highly popular as a man, for he was courteous and kind in all his intercourse with the people, public and private. Lee's letter, therefore, made a great stir; but he declared the measure to be "not only justifiable in the eyes of God and man, but absolutely necessary." He felt assured that the continental Congress would approve of the measure. And so they did. By resolution they recommended the committee of Baltimore to seize Eden and his papers, and send them to Philadelphia. The committee moved timidly, and before anything of the kind was attempted, Eden went on board the *Fowey* man-of-war, and abdicated government in Maryland.

A little later Lee received by express, intelligence of the arrival of some of Parker's fleet in the Cape Fear river. Acting upon the information contained in the despatch to Eden, he had already detached a battalion of riflemen toward Halifax, on the Roanoke;

and on the twelfth of May he set out in the same direction himself. His journey was timely, for his presence gave strength to the gathering militia of the North state, who were preparing to oppose the British forces then prowling upon their coasts.

Parker's fleet with Cornwallis had arrived, and Clinton was in chief command. On the fifth of May the latter issued a proclamation from on board the *Pallas* transport, offering free pardon to all who should lay down their arms, excepting those honored arch rebels, Robert Howe and Cornelius Harnett. The former was then in the field; and the latter, whom Josiah Quincy called "the Samuel Adams of North Carolina," was in the council. But Clinton's proclamation affected nothing. Governor Martin's experience might have predicted the result. The battle at Moore's Creek bridge had sounded the death knell of royal rule in the province, and this was soon perceived by the British commanders. So, in a spirit of petty spite, Cornwallis landed with a detachment, and desolated Howe's plantation. The chief exploit of his troops was an attack upon three old women in the mansion, one of whom was shot through the hip with a musket-ball, another was stabbed with a bayonet, and the third was knocked down with the butt of a musket. This was the first of those barbarous and cruel acts committed under the sanction of Cornwallis, that made his name synonymous with all that is satanic in the minds of the people of the South.

Apparently satisfied with this exploit, and also satisfied that every hour spent in the Cape Fear was lost, the whole British force went out to sea, and at the close of May appeared off Dewees island making for Charleston harbor. The patriots in that province, and especially those of the capital, had been extremely active for more than a year, and were quite well prepared to receive them. From the period of the stamp-act troubles, the whigs in Charleston had been vigilant and brave. Gadsden and Laurens, the Pinckneys, Moultrie, Drayton, the Rutledges, and others, had stood up boldly for the right on all occasions. And as the gathering clouds of the Revolution grew darker and darker, they were more

and more active; and at the moment when they perceived an appeal to arms to be inevitable, they commenced preparations for the contest. They organized and drilled military companies, procured arms, and seized the powder belonging to the province. They also sent bold men in a small vessel, to capture a British sloop laden with powder lying in the harbor of St. Augustine. They were rewarded with success and fifteen thousand pounds of powder. A part of this supply they unselfishly sent north for the grand army, and some of it was used by Arnold and his men at Quebec. Those Carolina whigs were wise as well as vigilant; and when Lord William Campbell came to govern the province, and used sweet and friendly words, they tested his sincerity, found him wanting in truthfulness and honor, and turned their backs upon him.

As early as September, 1775, Colonel Moultrie had, under the direction of the committee of safety of Charleston, proceeded to take possession of a small fort on Sullivan's island in the harbor. The garrison fled to two British sloops-of-war in the adjacent waters; and Lord Campbell, perceiving the storm of popular indignation against him to be daily increasing, particularly after it became known that he had been endeavoring to incite the Indians on the frontier to lift the hatchet for the king, and was tampering with the tories in the interior, also fled to these vessels for shelter, and abdicated royal power in South Carolina.

At the same time, Fort Johnson, on James island, three miles southward from Charleston, was taken possession of by the patriots. The British garrison had fled to the sloops-of-war, spiking the cannon when they left. The places of these were supplied with perfect ones, and on the fifteenth of September, the first republican flag ever displayed at the south, of which we have any notice, was floating over the main bastion of the fortress.*

* Moultrie, in his Memoirs says: "As there was no national flag at that time, I was desired by the council of safety to have one made, upon which, as the state troops were clothed in blue, and the fort was garrisoned by the first and second regiments, who wore a silver crescent on the front of their caps, I had a large blue flag made, with a crescent in the dexter corner, to be in uniform with the troops." Vol. i., p. 90.

West Point, the Northern Gateway

The great military academy at West Point was evolved from the defence works established by the Continental army in the highlands of the Hudson in 1778 for the purpose of obstructing the river against the British. On October 1, 1776, Congress appointed a committee to plan a military academy at the army; less than a year later it resolved to provide for a Corps of Invalids to serve as a military school, and in July, 1777, such a body was organized. A military post occupied West Point on January 20, 1778. In 1781 the Corps of Invalids was transferred, at Washington's request, from Philadelphia to form part of the garrison at West Point. In 1794 a Corps of Engineers and Artillerists with two cadets to each company was organized. It was not till 1802 that Congress authorized the establishment of a military academy which Washington had so strongly urged. West Point was adopted as the location and the academy was formally opened there on Independence Day in 1802.

In January, 1776, Colonel Christopher Gadsden assumed the control of all the troops in Charleston and vicinity, and held that position until the arrival of General John Armstrong, of Pennsylvania, in April, who had been promoted to brigadier in the continental service, and sent southward by the Congress to take the chief command there. The king's belligerent speech had convinced the Carolinians that there was little hope for reconciliation; and in March, the committee of safety at Charleston ordered Colonel Moultrie to construct a strong fort on Sullivan's island, six miles from the city, large enough to accommodate a thousand men, and to take command there. Moultrie immediately set about the work, and constructed it in sections of logs of the soft palmetto, filled in with sand. This fort, which was named *Sullivan*, was considered a sufficient defence of the inner harbor, in connection with Fort Johnson, against any fleet England was likely to send to one point in America. This confidence was not misplaced, for the fort did noble service in the conflict that speedily ensued.

Important changes were made at this time. First of all the civil government was revised; a temporary constitution was adopted; and the legislature under it was called the general assembly of South Carolina, having all the powers of supreme local government. The consummation of this change gave great joy to the people.* John Rutledge, one of the stanchest whigs of the South, was appointed president with the actual powers of governor;† and under

* "Two young gentlemen from South Carolina, in this city, who were in Charleston when their new constitution was promulgated, and when their new governor, and council, and assembly, walked out in procession, attended by the guards, company of cadets, light-horse, &c., told me that they were beheld by the people with transport and tears of joy. The people gazed at them with a kind of rapture. They both told me that the reflection that these were gentlemen whom they all loved, esteemed, and revered; gentlemen of their own choice — whom they could trust, and whom they could displace if any one of them should behave amiss, affected them so they could not help crying."—*John Adams to his wife, May* 17, 1776.

† John Rutledge was a native of Ireland, and came to America with his father, in 1735. He studied law at the Temple in London, and returned to his adopted country in 1761. Early in the republican ranks, he was honored with their unlimited confidence, and was chosen one of the delegates to represent South Carolina in the first continental Congress, in 1774. When the new and permanent constitution of South Carolina was framed, in 1778, he opposed it because it was too democratic; but his scruples were removed, and in 1779 he was chosen governor under it, with the power, temporarily conferred, of a dictator. He took the field at the head of the militia, and managed the affairs of state with skill and energy until the fall of Charleston, in 1780. After the war

his efficient management, preparations for the expected enemy were carried on vigorously. And the representatives of the people, having full confidence in the chief-magistrate and his council, wisely vested him and his chosen advisers with full executive power to administer the government during the recess of the legislature.

Rutledge and his friends used this power fully but discreetly. When rumors of the hostile preparations in England reached Charleston, the governor immediately authorized the construction of military works near the city, at eligible places. On the first of June, full one hundred pieces of cannon were mounted at various points around the harbor, from Fort Johnson on the south to Haddrell's Point on the north. Fort Sullivan was then nearly completed.

On the morning of the first of June, a fleet of forty or fifty sail appeared at anchor about eighteen miles north of Sullivan's island. It was the naval force of Sir Peter Parker, bearing the troops of Clinton and Cornwallis to the attack on Charleston. The civil and military authorities, ever on the alert, now became most active. Governor Rutledge caused the concerted alarm-signals to be fired, and sent expresses to the militia officers of the surrounding country, ordering them to muster their forces and repair to the capital with all possible speed. The summons was obeyed with alacrity, and every hour the republican army was augmented by hundreds of yeomen eager for the fray. Finally, on the morning of the fourth of June, the whole British fleet appeared off Charleston bar, and almost at the same hour, General Lee arrived, bringing with him some Virginia and North Carolina troops. These, added to those brought earlier by General Armstrong, and the militia battalions, made an available force of almost six thousand men.

Lee was hailed with every demonstration of joy, for all minds at the South were captivated with the idea of his great military prowess, skill, and experience. When, on his arrival, he assumed

he was first a judge of the court of chancery, and in 1789, was a judge of the supreme court of the United States. In 1791, he was appointed chief-justice of South Carolina, and was elevated to the seat of chief-justice of the United States in 1796. He died in July, 1800.

the supreme command, new courage seemed to pervade the republican ranks; and being well pleased with what had been already done, he joined heartily in efforts with Governor Rutledge in carrying forward the defences of the city. Believing that the first attack would be made upon the town, and that very speedily, everything was done to promote facility in the construction of defensive works. Martial law was declared. Valuable storehouses upon the wharves were taken down to make room for a line of defences along the water's edge. The streets were barricaded; and on account of the scarcity of lead, many window-sashes made of that metal were melted into bullets. Seven hundred negroes who belonged to loyalists were pressed into the service; and the money and papers of tories and the lukewarm whigs, were seized, for the moment, and the owners subjected to strict surveillance.

Had the British forces, on their arrival, immediately crossed the bar and attacked the forts and city, they might have secured an easy triumph. But they were tardy, and apparently fearful. Three weeks wore away before they made a bold push for victory. Then it was too late. Both parties, in the meantime, were active, the Americans especially so; and when Sir Henry Clinton landed several hundred troops upon Long Island, eastward of Sullivan's island, with the design of attacking Fort Sullivan, he found, upon the verge of the narrow strait which separates the two islands, a formidable battery ready to dispute his passage, under the command of Colonel Thompson, of the South Carolina rangers and others.* Here was a real cause for delay, and some time was consumed, by the British, in constructing batteries to oppose Thompson's, and to cover the boats when they should attempt the passage.

During those three weeks, Moultrie and his men were very dili gent in strengthening their little palmetto fort; and proper dispositions were made of the other troops. Lee made his headquarters

* Colonel Thompson's force consisted of three hundred riflemen of his own regiment; two hundred North Carolina regulars under Colonel Clarke, two hundred South Carolina militia under Colonel Horrey, and the Raccoon company of militia riflemen. They had an eighteen-pounder and a fieldpiece.

at Haddrell's Point, where a strong force, under General Armstrong, was stationed; and Colonel Gadsden commanded the first regiment of South Carolina regulars, at Fort Johnson. The works along the city front were well manned; and from the first the republicans had been in excellent spirits. Lee, however, confessed that he felt fearful at times. He had but little confidence in the troops, and he regarded Fort Sullivan as a frail affair, for he was ignorant of the capacity of the palmetto to resist the force of balls. Soon after his arrival he urged Moultrie to construct a bridge of boats across the channel from the rear of the island to the main, over which he might retreat, not doubting that the necessity would arise. On this point he was very anxious, and repeatedly spoke of the bridge. But Moultrie had no such fears. "For my part," he said, "I never was uneasy on not having a retreat, because I never imagined that the enemy could force me to that necessity;" and when the battle commenced, he had no other mode of escape than in boats.

Toward the middle of June, Clinton sent a proclamation on shore, offering pardon to all who should lay down their arms, and at the same time, Admiral Parker's flag-ship, the *Bristol*, of fifty guns, was taken safely over the bar into the harbor, after removing her cannon. The people laughed at Sir Henry's proclamation, and were not alarmed by the presence of the *Bristol* in the harbor. On the twenty-sixth, the *Experiment*, another fifty-gun ship, got over the bar in the same way, and was speedily followed by the frigates *Active*, *Actæon*, *Solebay*, *Syren*, and *Sphynx*, of twenty-eight guns each; the *Ranger*, sloop, and *Thunder*, bomb, of twenty-eight guns each, and the *Friendship*, of twenty-two guns. These composed the attacking squadron.

At ten o'clock, on the morning of the twenty-eighth, Admiral Parker, on board the *Bristol*, made the signal for attack. The *Thunder* advanced, and opened the conflict by throwing shells upon the fort. She was followed by the others, with springs upon their cables; and at a quarter before eleven o'clock they anchored in front of the fort.

The little fortress had about thirty cannon mounted, consisting of eighteen, nineteen, and thirty-two pounders, and was manned by only four hundred and thirty men, under Moultrie. Among them was the afterward famous partisan leader, Francis Marion, who then received his first practical lessons in the art of actual war They were all determined men, and felt no fear, and the moment the invading fleet cast anchor, they open a heavy cannonade upon them, with terrible effect. Each vessel returned the compliment by a broadside that seemed sufficient to scatter the little fort to the winds. But the iron storm fell almost harmlessly. The balls sent into the spongy palmetto logs, produced no fracture, and instead of weakening the fort, actually lent it strength.

When the battle commenced, Lee was trying to reach the island in a small boat, but was driven back by a strong concurrent wind and tide. "I never in my life," he said, "felt so uneasy; and what added to my uneasiness was, that I knew our stock of ammunition was miserably low. I once thought of ordering the commanding officer to spike his guns, and when his ammunition was spent, to retreat with as little loss as possible."

Lee's young aid (Mr. Byrd) succeeded in crossing to the island, and reported to his commander the fact that the garrison were in high spirits. Lee then crossed over in order to animate them by his presence; "but I found," he said, "they had no occasion for such encouragement."—"The cool courage they displayed," he continued, "astonished and enraptured me, for I do assure you, my dear general, I never experienced a hotter fire. Twelve full hours it was continued without intermission. The noble fellows who were mortally wounded, conjured their brethren never to abandon the standard of liberty. Those who lost their limbs deserted not their posts. Upon the whole they acted like Romans in the third century."*

Simultaneously with the advance of the ships to attack Fort Sullivan, Clinton's batteries upon Long island and floating batteries in the creek, opened upon Thompson's; and a portion of the British

* Lee to Washington, July 1, 1776.

land force embarked in boats, under cover of their artillery, to force their way to Sullivan's island, and assail the fort on its westward and unfinished side. At the same time, Parker, having perceived the weakness of the fort on that side, ordered the *Actæon*, *Sphynx*, and *Syren*, to take a position in the channel so as to enfilade the garrison. But both attempts failed. Clinton's whole regular force on Long Island was about two thousand troops, and between five and six hundred seamen, while Colonel Thompson had only two cannon, but his riflemen were among the best marksmen in the province. With these he kept the enemy at bay. Several times Clinton's boats advanced, and when within musket-shot, Thompson's troops would open a destructive fire from the battery and small arms. At last this attempt was abandoned, and Clinton's troops were withdrawn. Meanwhile the three frigates had struck upon a shoal called the Middle Ground, and were dreadfully battered by shots from the fort. Two of them at length got off, with some damage, but the *Actæon* was so thoroughly grounded that she could not be moved.

While these more remote operations were in progress, the battle was raging furiously between the fort and the fleet. "While the continued thunder from the ships," said a British writer, "seemed sufficient to shake the firmness of the bravest enemy, and daunt the courage of the most veteran soldier, the return made by the fort could not fail of calling for the respect, as well as of highly incommoding the brave seamen of Britain. In the midst of that dreadful war of artillery, they stuck with the greatest firmness and constancy to their guns, fired deliberately and slowly, and took a cool and effective aim. The ships suffered accordingly; they were torn to pieces, and the slaughter was dreadful. Never did British valor shine more conspicuous, and never did our marines, in an engagement of the same nature with any foreign enemy, experience as rude an encounter. The springs of the *Bristol's* cable being cut by the shot, she lay for some time exposed in such a manner to the enemy's fire as to be most dreadfully raked. The brave Captain Morris [who commanded the *Actæon*], after receiving a number of wounds, which would have sufficiently justified a gal-

lant man in retiring from his station, still with a noble obstinacy disdained to quit his duty, until his arm being at length shot off, he was carried away in a condition which did not afford a possibility of recovery. It is said that the quarter-deck of the *Bristol* was at one time cleared of every person but the commodore, who stood alone, a spectacle of intrepidity and firmness which have seldom been equalled, never exceeded. The others on that deck were either killed or carried down to have their wounds dressed Nor did Captain Scott, of the *Experiment*, miss his share of the danger or glory, who, besides the loss of an arm, received so many other wounds that his life was at first despaired of."*

At two o'clock in the afternoon the garrison ceased firing, and the British thought the fort was abandoned. It was only a lull in the storm of battle, because the powder of the republicans was exhausted. Lee soon sent them a supply from Haddrell's Point, and with it a note to Colonel Moultrie, from Governor Rutledge, written with a pencil on a strip of paper, saying: "I send you five hundred pounds of powder. I think you may be supplied well from Haddrell's. You know our collection is not very great. Honor and victory, my good sir, to you, and our worthy countrymen with you." The roaring of cannon was speedily resumed, and the contest raged furiously until sunset, when it slacked, and at half-past nine ceased altogether. At eleven o'clock the shattered vessels slipped their cables, and withdrew to Five-Fathom Hole, about two miles northeastward of Fort Johnson, except the *Actæon*, which remained aground.

The loss on board the ships was dreadful. Every man stationed on the quarter-decks of the vessels, at the beginning of the action, was either killed or wounded. Captain Morris soon afterward died of his wounds. Forty men were killed and seventy-one wounded on board the *Bristol*, and Parker received a slight contusion. The *Experiment* lost in killed and wounded ninety-nine. Lord William Campbell, the fugitive royal governor of the province, who was serving as a volunteer, was badly wounded at the beginning of the

* Burke's Annual Register.

action. The entire loss of the British was not less than two hundred and twenty-five, while their vessels were almost disabled. The *Bristol* had not less than seventy balls put through her; and when the spring of her cable was cut, she swung round with her stern toward the fort, and instantly every gun that could be brought to bear upon the vessel hurled its shot upon her. The American loss was comparatively trifling. Only ten of the garrison were killed, and twenty wounded, most of whom were injured by cannon-balls that passed through the embrasures. Although the *Thunder* bomb cast more than fifty shells into the fort, not one of them did serious damage, for within was a large moat filled with water, into which most of them fell, and the fuses were extinguished. After the battle twelve hundred British shot of different sizes, were picked up in and around the fort, and a great number of thirteen-inch shells.

While the battle was raging, and the roar of three hundred cannon shook the city, the roofs, windows, balconies, and every accessible elevation in the town, were filled with anxious spectators, who, like those in Boston a year before, when Breed's hill was red with blood and the British uniforms, had friends in the fray. In terrible suspense they watched and listened during that long summer afternoon, but could not get tidings of either victory or defeat. Early in the engagement the crescent flag of Moultrie's regiment, that floated over one of the bastions, disappeared; and it seemed, to the spectators, as if the sun of hope had gone down with that banner. But it soon rose again; and through the weary hours of the day it fluttered proudly in the breeze, continually gladdening the heart of the spectators with hope. Its staff had been cut by a cannon-ball, and it fell upon the sand outside the fort. The next moment a young sergeant named Jasper, one of Marion's recruits from the Pedee, leaped from the parapet, walked deliberately upon the beach the whole length of the fort, picked up the flag, mounted the bastion, affixed the banner to a sponge-staff, and driving that into a secure place, left the blue standard floating defiantly over the spot from which it had fallen. The shield of God's providence

was surely around the brave Sergeant Jasper, for the iron hail was falling thick and fast upon every square yard of the beleaguered fortress. His companions in the fort hailed his return with a shout; and when, on the following morning, Governor Rutledge visited the fort and heard the story of Jasper's exploit, he thanked the gallant subaltern in the name of their common country, presented him with his own beautiful small-sword which hung upon his thigh, and offered him a lieutenant's commission. The young hero, who could neither read nor write, modestly refused the latter, saying: "I am not fit to keep officer's company; I am but a sergeant."

The British fleet was so terribly smitten that it could not resume the conflict in the morning. The *Actæon* was still hopelessly aground, and at dawn many shots were hurled upon her from the fort. Parker, by signal, immediately ordered her crew, to set fire to and abandon her. They did so, leaving the colors flying and the guns loaded. When they had departed some Americans boarded the burning vessel, secured her colors as a trophy, fired her guns at the enemy, carried off the ship's bell, and fled with three boats loaded with stores. Half an hour later she blew up and almost entirely disappeared.

At the same early hour Sir Henry Clinton made another effort to lead his land troops from Long island to Sullivan's island, but Thompson confronted him with such hot volleys that he was compelled to retreat behind his batteries. All hope for success against the "rebels" now perished, and the British fleet withdrew to Long Island to recruit, preparatory to a voyage northward. Towar the close of July, Clinton and Cornwallis, with their troops, sailed in transports for New York, escorted by the *Solebay* frigate, with Sir Peter Parker on board. They arrived at Sandy Hook on the first of August, and joined the forces under the brothers Howe in operations against the republican army at New York and on Long Island.

This repulse of the enemy produced the greatest joy among the patriots of the South, and the name of Moultrie was upon every lip as the savior, not only of Charleston, but of the entire Caro-

linas, from the tread of the invader. "I should have thanked you and your garrison this morning, *vis-a-vis*," wrote Lee from Charleston, at nine o'clock in the forenoon of the twenty-ninth, "but am prevented by a great deal of business. I do most heartily thank you all, and shall do you justice in my letters to Congress." Governor Rutledge wrote to Moultrie on the same day—"My very particular thanks are due to you and the brave officers and men in your garrison for their heroic behavior yesterday. I beg that you will receive them yourself, and make them acceptable to the gentlemen, officers, and soldiers." From Fort Johnson, Colonel Gadsden wrote on the first of July—"I most heartily congratulate the colony on the drubbing you gave those fellows the other day, and only wish you had had powder enough, that it might have been complete."

Honors, other than mere thanks, also awaited Moultrie. On the day when the British left Charleston harbor, Mrs. Bernard Elliot, in the name of the women of Charleston, presented to him, for his regiment, a pair of elegant colors, one of them of blue and the other of red silk, richly embroidered by their own fair hands.* The legislature of South Carolina changed the name of the little palmetto fortress to *Fort Moultrie*. Its brave defender was commissioned a brigadier; and on the twentieth of July, the continental Congress passed a resolution of thanks to Moultrie, Lee, and Thompson, and the officers and men under their command.†

* Three years afterward these colors were planted upon the walls of Savannah by the brave Jasper and his compatriots, Bush and Hume, when the French and American armies, under D'Estaing and Lincoln, were beleaguering that city. The French flag had been just raised near them by one of D'Estaing's aids, when he, with Bush and Hume, fell mortally wounded, leaving their colors fluttering in the breeze. Lieutenant Gray, of the South Carolina regiment, seeing his comrades fall, seized the standards and kept them erect. He too, soon fell, when Jasper sprang forward, secured the colors of his regiment, fastened them firmly upon the parapet, and waved his cap in triumph, when he fell, pierced by a rifle-ball. He was carried to the rear and died. His last words were—"Tell Mrs. Elliot I lost my life supporting the colors she presented to our regiment." The colors were saved, and seven months afterward they were captured by the British, when Charleston fell into their hands, and they are now trophies in the Tower of London. Jasper's name lives in history, and Jasper square, in the city of Savannah, commemorates that and his gallant deed.

† "William Moultrie was a native of South Carolina, and was born in 1730. We find him first in public service as an officer, in the expedition against the Cherokees in 1760. He was also in subsequent expeditions against that unhappy people. When the Revolution broke out, he was among the earliest in South Carolina to take the field on the republican side. His defence of the fort on Sullivan's island in 1776, gave him great eclat, and caused his promotion to brigadier. He gained a battle over the British near Beaufort, in 1779; and in May, 1780, was second in command when Charleston was besieged. He went to Philadelphia while a prisoner-of-war, and did not re

From all parts of the continent, wherever republican hearts were beating, voices were heard uttering sentiments of warmest gratitude to the heroes of Charleston harbor; and Washington, in announcing the triumph to his army, on the twenty-first of July, which was then in daily expectation of an attack from a stronger British force that blockaded New York harbor, said: "This generous example of our troops under like circumstances with us, the general hopes, will animate every officer and soldier to imitate and even outdo them, when the enemy shall make the same attempt on us. With such a bright example before us, of what can be done by brave men fighting in defence of their country, we shall be loaded with a double share of shame and infamy if we do not acquit ourselves with courage, and manifest a determined resolution to conquer or die."

This conflict, one of the severest that occurred during the long war of the Revolution, was properly regarded by both parties as very important. At that moment Lord Howe was upon the ocean bearing the credentials of a *commissioner* to settle all disputes, and of a *commander* to prosecute the war, if the Americans should refuse submission to the humiliating terms to be proposed by Great Britain. This discomfiture rendered a reconciliation less likely than it would have been had the invaders been victorious, and it was, therefore, disastrous to the royal cause. It diminished the traditional reverence for British power which had ever filled the minds of the colonists. The republicans were animated with fresh courage by the event, while British pride was humbled by having its boastful ships-of-war, in their first encounter with the "rebels," vanquished, shattered, disabled, and driven to sea in disgrace, bearing away in deep mortification two of her ablest generals and their well-disciplined troops. The victory was complete; and for three years South Carolina was comparatively quiet, while the

turn to South Carolina until 1782. He was several times chosen governor of the state, and retired from public life only when the infirmities of age demanded repose. He published his 'Memoirs of the Revolution,' which related to the war in the South, in two volumes, in 1802, printed by David Longworth, of New York. Governor Moultrie died at Charleston, on the twenty-seventh of September, 1805, at the age of seventy-five years."—*Lossing's Field-Book of the Revolution.*

tempest of war was sweeping over regions of the North. Yet these southrons were not idle listeners to the roar of cannon in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania, but flocked thither in hundreds, under brave leaders, to do battle for their common country. The patriots of that war were not divided by sectional interests. There was no geographical line over which men hesitated to pass. A desire for the happiness of the New England people, was a twin-sentiment with love for his own fireside, in the heart of the Carolinian and Georgian; and the bosom of the "Green-Mountain Boy" heaved as strongly with emotions of joy when a blow for freedom was successfully dealt among the rice-fields of the South, as when the shout of victory went up from the heights of Saratoga. Yet sectional *feelings* did sometimes produce serious heart-burnings among the troops under Washington during the summer and autumn of 1776, and at times, not only disturbed the general harmony of the camp, but menaced the army with dissolution. But the prudence and sagacity of the commander-in-chief, and the influence of military discipline, at length harmonized these discordant elements in a great measure; and the soldiers from different provinces fought together cheerfully and zealously for the good of their common country.

The Declaration of Independence

From the facsimile in the Department of State, Washington

On May 10, 1776, John Adams presented to Congress a resolution recommending the Assemblies and Conventions of the United Colonies to adopt governments. On the fifteenth he reported a preamble to this resolution which declared that it was "irreconcilable to reason and a good conscience for the colonists to take the oaths required for the support of the government of Great Britain," which was agreed to. After an interval of dread and hesitation, Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, presented on June 7th his resolution: "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States; and that all political connection between us and Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." Consideration of this resolution was postponed till July 1st and a committee was appointed on June 11th to prepare a declaration in conformity with the resolution. On July 1st the committee presented a draft of the proposed declaration as prepared by Thomas Jefferson, and on the next day the resolution that declared the Colonies "Free and Independent States" was adopted. The form of the declaration was under discussion till July 4th, on which day, after some changes, the great pronouncement of American independence was adopted. Signed only by John Hancock, president of Congress, the declaration was then printed and scattered throughout the country. Congress ordered it to be engrossed on parchment for the signatures of members, and these were inscribed on August 2d. This parchment is preserved at Washington.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Natures God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. ——— We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes, and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world. ——— He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. ——— He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. ——— He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only. ——— He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. ——— He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. ——— He has refused for a long time after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise, the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within. ——— He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States, for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. ——— He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. ——— He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries. ——— He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance. — He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies, without the consent of our legislatures. ——— He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. ——— He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: — For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: — For protecting them by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: — For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world. — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: — For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of Trial by Jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences. ——— For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: ——— For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and

altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their own Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends. —

We, therefore the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the Name and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Button Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
Geo Walton

Wm Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

John Hancock

Edward Rutledge
Thos Heyward Junr
Thomas Lynch Junr
Arthur Middleton

Samuel Chase
Wm Paca
Thos Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton

George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Th Jefferson
Benj Harrison
Thos Nelson jr
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carter Braxton

Robt Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benj Franklin
John Morton
Geo Clymer
Jas Smith
Geo Taylor
James Wilson
Geo Ross

Caesar Rodney
Geo Read
Tho M:Kean

Wm Floyd
Phil Livingston
Fras Lewis
Lewis Morris

Richd Stockton
Jno Witherspoon
Fras Hopkinson
John Hart
Abra Clark

Josiah Bartlett
Wm Whipple
Saml Adams
John Adams
Robt Treat Paine
Elbridge Gerry

Step Hopkins
William Ellery

Roger Sherman
Sam Huntington
Wm Williams
Oliver Wolcott

Matthew Thornton

CHAPTER XIV.

CHANGES IN THE PUBLIC MIND — ASPIRATIONS FOR POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE — EARLY MANIFESTATIONS OF THIS IDEA — PUBLIC MOVEMENTS IN FAVOR OF INDEPENDENCE — FIRST ACTION OF CONGRESS ON THE SUBJECT — A BOLDER STEP — RICHARD HENRY LEE'S RESOLUTIONS FOR ABSOLUTE INDEPENDENCE — ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION PROPOSED — THE COLONIES DECLARED FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES BY RESOLUTION — DEBATES ON THE DECLARATION AND ITS ADOPTION — FORM OF THE DECLARATION — ITS PROMULGATION AND EFFECTS — ITS RECEPTION BY THE ARMY — THE KING'S STATUE DESTROYED — SCENES IN NEW YORK — IMPORTANCE OF THE DECLARATION CONSIDERED.

While important military operations were in progress throughout the colonies, preparatory to the arrival of British and German forces sent to crush the rebellion, and men were much occupied with questions of local interest, having reference, however, to the common good, a mighty change, silently but powerfully like the unfolding of the seasons, and big with solemn results, was working in the public mind. And when the trees blossomed on the New England hills, and southern forests were bowed with their wealth of foliage, that change was as palpable as the transfiguration of the face of nature. Loyalty as strong as ever bound any nation together, was no longer a controlling sentiment in the hearts of the Anglo-American colonists, and in its place was a burning desire for Independence.

The tone of the king's speech, and the proceedings of the Parliament and the ministry in the autumn of 1775, and winter of 1776, caused the colonists, who had hoped even against hope, for justice and conciliation, to pause and ask the significant question — "What advantage have we in a political connection with a power deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity?" To this question there arose simultaneously from every colony the response — "None

whatever;" and the great heart of America beat in unison with the sentiment of the English historian and novelist, who had recently said in verse:—

> "Thy spirit, INDEPENDENCE, let me share,
> Lord of the *lion*-heart and *eagle*-eye;
> Thy steps I follow, with my bosom bare,
> Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky."

It is now impossible to determine the precise time when aspirations for political independence first became a prevailing sentiment among the people of the colonies. The thought, no doubt, was cherished in many minds years before it found expression; but it was not a subject for public discussion more than a few months before it was brought before Congress by Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia. A few men, among whom were Samuel Adams, Doctor Franklin, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, Timothy Dwight, and Thomas Paine, seem to have had an early impression that political independence was the only cure for the evils under which the colonies groaned; yet these ideas, when expressed, met with little favor, even among the most ardent patriots.* English writers declare that, from the beginning, the colonists aimed at political independence; and Chalmers asserts that there were documents among those of the board of trade to prove that such had been the desire and intent of the colonists through every administration, from the time of the Revolution in England, in 1688. As early as 1773, according to Mr. Wirt, Patrick Henry, speaking of Great Britain, said: "She *will* drive us to extremities; no accommodation *will* take

* "I urged," says Doctor Dwight, "in conversation with several gentlemen of great respectability, firm Whigs, and my intimate friends, the importance, and even the necessity, of a declaration of independence on the part of the colonies, and alleged for this measure the very same arguments which afterward were generally considered as decisive, but found them disposed to give me and my arguments a hostile and contemptuous, instead of a cordial reception. Yet, at this time, all the resentment and enthusiasm awakened by the odious measures of Parliament, by the peculiarly obnoxious conduct of the British agents in this country, and by the recent battles of Lexington and Breed's hill, were at the highest pitch. These gentlemen may be considered as representatives of the great body of the thinking men in this country. A few may, perhaps, be excepted, but none of these durst at that time openly declare their opinions to the public. For myself, I regarded the die as cast, and the hopes of reconciliation as vanished, and believed that the colonists would never be able to defend themselves unless they renounced their dependence on Great Britain."—Dwight's Travels in New England, i., 150.

place; hostilities *will soon* commence; and a desperate and bloody touch it will be." This, Mr. Wirt asserts, was said in the presence of Colonel Samuel Overton, who at once asked Mr. Henry if he thought the colonies sufficiently strong to oppose successfully the fleets and armies of Great Britain. "I will be candid with you," replied Mr. Henry. "I doubt whether we *shall* be able, *alone*, to cope with so powerful a nation; but," continued he, rising from his chair with great animation, "where is France? where is Spain? where is Holland? the natural enemies of Great Britain. Where will they be all this while? Do you suppose they will stand by, idle and indifferent spectators to the contest? Will Louis XVI. be asleep all this time? Believe me, *no!* When Louis XVI. shall be satisfied, by our serious opposition and our *Declaration of Independence*, that all prospect of a reconciliation is gone, then, and not till then, will he furnish us with arms, ammunition, and clothing; and not with them only, but he will send his fleets and armies to fight our battles for us; he will form a treaty with us, offensive and defensive, against our unnatural mother. Spain and Holland will join the confederation! Our independence will be established! and we shall take our stand among the nations of the earth!" How literally these predictions were soon fulfilled the pen of history has already recorded.*

As early as 1761, James Otis evinced his perception of the probability of a political separation of the colonies from Great Britain; and more than ten years earlier, Samuel Adams had hinted at it in one of his published essays. Doctor Franklin believed it possible in 1754; and in 1774, he talked of it publicly, as a probable event. It was an earnest desire in the heart of John Adams from the day when the Boston port-bill went into operation, and to that end he talked, and wrote, and labored, until the desired result was accomplished. But previous to the meeting of the second continental Congress, in May, 1775, there was no serious thought of independence entertained by the mass of the American people. The respectful petition of the Congress addressed to the king in July,

* Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," ii., 67, second edition.

virtually disclaimed all desires for or thoughts of a separation; and they even said: "Our breasts retain too tender a regard for the kingdom from which we derive our origin, to request such a reconciliation as might in any measure be inconsistent with her dignity or her welfare." Yet in the debate in Parliament which attended the consideration of that petition, the ministerial party charged as a special offence on the part of the Americans, that they aimed at independence. Such was the position taken by Lord Mansfield and others; and no doubt, as was intimated by an opposition member, this persistence in charging the colonists with a desire for independence, promoted the growth of such a desire. "Is it their intention," exclaimed the earl of Shelburne, "by thus perpetually sounding independence in the ears of the Americans, to lead them to it, or, by treating them, upon suspicion, with every possible violence, to compel them into that which must be our ruin?"

But at length the idea of independence appears to have become wonderfully active in the common mind in America. It became a moving power. "The lightning of the crusades was in the people's hearts, and it needed but a single electric touch to make it blaze forth upon the world," says James, when writing of an earlier disruption of political systems. Likewise the flame of desire for absolute independence glowed in every patriot bosom at the beginning of 1776, and the vigorous paragraphs of "Common Sense"*

* Paine also wrote a series of political pamphlets called "The Crisis," which were admirably adapted to the state of the times, and which did much toward keeping alive the spirit of determined rebellion against the unjust government of Great Britain. They were put forth at different times, from the close of 1776 until the end of the war. The first number was published in December, 1776. Paine was then in Washington's camp, on the Delaware. The pamphlet was read to every corporal's guard, and its strong and truthful language had a powerful effect in the army and among the people at large. Among other equally strong paragraphs, was the following:—

"I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupported to perish, who had so earnestly and repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the infidel in me as to suppose that He has relinquished the government of the world, and given us to the care of devils; and as I do not, I can not see on what grounds the king of Great Britain can look up to Heaven for help against us: a common murderer, a highwayman, or a house-breaker has as good a pretence as he."

The second "Crisis" was published in January, 1777. It was addressed to Lord Howe, and ridiculed his proclamations, &c. The third number was published at Philadelphia on the nineteenth of April, 1777. This was devoted to an examination of events since the declaration of Independence, and a reiteration of arguments in favor of that measure. In September, immediately after

and kindred publications, as we have observed, laboring with the voice of impassioned oratory at every public gathering of the people, uncapped the volcano, and its brilliant coruscations were seen and hailed with a shout throughout the land.

The colonial assemblies soon began to move in the matter. North Carolina was the first to take the bold progressive step toward independence. By a vote of a convention held on the twenty-second of April, 1776, the representatives of that state in the continental Congress were authorized "to concur with those in the other colonies in declaring independence." Massachusetts took a similar step. On the tenth, the general assembly requested the people of that colony, at the then approaching election of new representatives, to give them instructions on the subject of independence. Pursuant to this request, the people of Boston, in town meeting assembled, on the twenty-third, instructed their representatives to use their best endeavors to have their delegates in Congress "advised that, in case Congress should think it necessary, for the safety of the United Colonies, to declare themselves independent of Great Britain, the inhabitants of that colony, with their lives and the *remnants* of their fortunes, would most cheerfully support them in the measure." The convention of Virginia passed a similar resolution on the seventeenth of May, but went further, by instructing their representatives to *propose* a declaration of independence. So, also, did the assembly of Rhode Island, during its session in that month. On the eighth of June, the New York delegates asked for special instructions on that subject; but the

the battle on the Brandywine, the fourth "Crisis" was published. It was a cheering trumpet-blast for the army. In March, 1778, the fifth "Crisis" was published at Lancaster, in Pennsylvania. It consisted of a letter to Sir William Howe, and an address to the inhabitants of America. The sixth "Crisis," consisting of a letter to the British commissioners (Carlisle, Clinton, and Eden), was published at Philadelphia, in October, 1778. The seventh number was published at Philadelphia, on the twenty-first of November, 1778. It was addressed to the people of England. The eighth "Crisis," which was a second address to the people of England, was published in March, 1780; in June following the ninth number was published; and in October of the same year, a long discussion on the subject of taxes, called "A Crisis Extraordinary," was published. It was written the previous March. The last three numbers were written at the instigation of Robert Morris, the financier, with the knowledge and approval of Washington. Two others were published during the war; one discussed general topics, the other, published in May, 1782, considered "The present State of News."—Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," ii., 68, second edition.

provincial assembly, deeming itself incompetent to instruct without the previous sanction of the people, did no more than to recommend them to signify their sentiments at the new election just at hand. The assembly of Connecticut, on the fourteenth of June, instructed the delegates from that colony to give their assent to a declaration of independence; on the fifteenth, the New Hampshire provincial Congress issued similar instructions, and on the twenty-first, the new delegates from New Jersey were instructed to act in the matter as their judgments should dictate. In the Pennsylvania assembly, as early as November, 1775, the subject of independence had been hinted at. The conservatives were alarmed, and procured the adoption of instructions to their delegates adverse to such an idea. In June these restrictions were removed, but the delegates were neither instructed nor officially permitted to concur with the other colonies in a declaration of independence. The convention of Maryland, by a resolution adopted about the last of May, positively forbade their delegates voting for independence. Georgia, South Carolina, and Delaware, took no action on the subject, and their delegates were left free to vote as they pleased.*

These movements among the people in the various colonies, made a desire for independence a living principle in the hall of the continental Congress, and on the tenth of May, John Adams, in behalf of a committee appointed on his suggestion to prepare a resolution, recommending the people of the several colonies to form state governments, offered the following: "*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the several assemblies and conventions of the United Colonies, where no government sufficient to the exigencies of their affairs hath hitherto been established, to adopt such a government as shall, in the opinions of the representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and America in general." A committee of three, of which John Adams was chairman, was appointed to prepare a preamble to this resolution. They reported one on the fifteenth, of most significant tenor, equivalent, in some respects to a declara-

* Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," ii., 69, second edition.

tion of independence. It declared that it was "irreconcilable to reason and a good conscience for the colonists to take the oaths required for the support of the government of Great Britain." It was also declared necessary that all royal power should be suppressed, and "all the powers of government exerted under the authority of the people of the colonies, for the preservation of internal peace, virtue, and good order, as well as for the defence of their lives, liberties, and properties, against the hostile invasions and civil depredations of their enemies."

This preamble elicited much debate, and very prudent men opposed it as premature, arguing with force, that a confederation of the states, stronger than that which common danger formed, and which then bound them, should be first established, before the different colonies should proceed to organize themselves into independent sovereignties. "In this province," said Wilson, of Pennsylvania, "if that preamble passes, there will be an immediate dissolution of every kind of authority; the people will be instantly in a state of nature. Why, then, precipitate this measure? Before we are prepared to build the new house, why should we pull down the old one and expose ourselves to all the inclemencies of the season." Others argued in the same way, with great force; and on the twelfth of June, a committee was appointed "to prepare and digest the form of confederation to be entered into between these colonies."* But they did not wait until the new house was built. The resolution offered by Mr. Adams, and the preamble, were agreed to with but few dissenting voices.

This was a very bold step, but not sufficiently in advance to satisfy the more ardent advocates for absolute independence. The hearts of a majority in the Congress beat anxiously for the consummation of an event which all felt must inevitably occur, yet no

* The committee was composed of one from each colony, and consisted of Messrs. Bartlett, S Adams, Hopkins, Sherman, R. R. Livingston, Dickinson, M'Kean, Stone, Nelson, Hewes, E. Rutledge, and Gwinnet.

As early as July, 1775, Doctor Franklin had submitted to the Congress a sketch of articles of confederation, limiting the time of their vitality to the moment when reconciliation with Great Britain should take place. At that time the Congress had no fixed plans for the future, and the subject was allowed to sleep until awakened by the proposition for independence.

one seemed willing to take the awful responsibility upon himself of lifting the knife that should sever the cord that bound the American colonies to the British throne. For twenty days, doubt, and dread, and hesitation, brooded over the national assembly, when, on the morning of the seventh of June, Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, acting under the convictions of his own judgment, and sustained by the commands of the Virginia convention, arose, and with his clear, musical voice, read aloud the resolution—"That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; and that all political connection between us and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." John Adams immediately seconded the resolution; and to shield these bold men from the ire of the king and his ministers, Congress directed their secretary to omit the names of its mover and seconder. Then they adjourned until the next day.

This proposition for independence produced instant relief. The Congress breathed freer. It seemed as if a clap of thunder had sundered the clouds of gloom, and permitted the blessed sunlight to come down to cheer them. They shook hands with each other with mutual congratulations, and three days afterward took up the subject for debate. Time for thought, for deliberation, for obtaining the acquiescence of the several colonies, was needed, and it was agreed to postpone the further consideration of the subject until the first day of July. Meanwhile, to prevent a loss of time, a committee was appointed on the eleventh, to prepare a declaration in accordance with the spirit of the resolution.*

On the first of July, Mr. Lee's resolution was called up, and at the same time, the committee presented a draft of a declaration of independence, prepared by Mr. Jefferson, and adopted in committee. On the following day, the resolution declaring the colonies to be "free and independent states," was adopted, and the *second* of

* The committee consisted of Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia; John Adams, of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin, of Pennsylvania; Roger Sherman, of Connecticut; and Robert R. Livingston, of New York. Mr. Lee was called away to his home, in Virginia, on the evening of the tenth, by intelligence of the serious illness of his wife. This fact accounts for his not being upon the committee

July, rather than the *fourth*, should be celebrated as our national anniversary. It was only the form of the declaration that was agreed to on the latter day.*

The debates on the declaration of independence continued for three consecutive days. It was taken up and discussed by paragraphs, and many alterations, omissions, and additions, were made. Much conflicting sentiment appeared during the discussion, and at times there was considerable acrimony displayed. Richard Henry Lee, the Adamses, Doctor Witherspoon, and Edward Rutledge, were the chief speakers in favor of the measure; while Mr. Dickenson opposed both the resolution and declaration, as premature and unnecessary.

Although it was evident from the first introduction of the resolution, that a majority of the colonists would vote for it, its friends were fearful that a *unanimous* vote of the colonies could not be obtained, inasmuch as the assemblies of Maryland and Pennsylvania had refused to sanction the measure, and South Carolina, Georgia, and New York, were silent. The delegates from Maryland were unanimously in favor of it, while those from Pennsylvania were divided. On the twenty-fourth of June, at a convention held in Philadelphia, the people expressed their willingness, by resolution, "to concur in a vote of Congress, declaring the United Colonies free and independent states;" and by the unwearied exertions and great influence of Charles Carroll, William Paca, Samuel Chase, and others, the convention of Maryland recalled their former instructions on the twenty-eighth of June, and empowered their delegates "to concur with the other colonies in a declaration of independence." The most important barriers to unanimity were now broken down. When a vote was taken in committee of the whole house, on the first of July, all the colonies assented to the

* On the third of July, John Adams wrote to his wife "The day is past. The 2d day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward for ever more."

declaration, except Pennsylvania and Delaware; four of the seven delegates of the former voting against it, and the two delegates who were present from Delaware were divided—Thomas M'Kean favoring it, George Read opposing it. Mr. M'Kean, burning with a desire to have his state speak in favor of the great measure, immediately sent an express after Cæsar Rodney, the other delegate from Delaware, then eighty miles distant. Rodney was in the saddle within ten minutes after he received Mr. M'Kean's letter, and arrived in Philadelphia on the morning of the fourth of July, just before the final vote was taken. Thus Delaware was secured. On that day the declaration was taken up for final decision. Robert Morris and John Dickenson, of Pennsylvania, were absent. Both had opposed the measure from the beginning, as rash and unwise. Of the other five who were present, Doctor Franklin, James Wilson, and John Morton, were in favor, and Thomas Willing and Charles Humphreys were opposed to it; so the vote of Pennsylvania was also secured in favor of the declaration. The question was taken, and on the fourth of July, 1776, a unanimous vote of the thirteen colonies was given in favor of the great declaration which pronounced them FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES.* That momentous question was decided at about two o'clock in the afternoon, and instantly the great bell in the statehouse, upon which had been inscribed, full twenty years before, the words of Holy Writ—"*Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof*,"† rung out the joyful news, in obedience to this solemn injunction. The annunciation was made in the following plain manner in the journal of Congress for that day:—

"Agreeably to the order of the day, the Congress resolved itself into a committee of the whole, to take into their further consideration the declaration; and, after some time, the president resumed the chair, and Mr. Harrison reported that the committee have agreed to a declaration, which they desired him to report. The declaration being read, was agreed to as follows:—

* Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," ii., 76

† Leviticus xxv., 10.

"A DECLARATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

"When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

"He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

"He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operations till his assent should be obtained; and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

"He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature—a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

"He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the repository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

"He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people.

"He has refused, for a long time after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining, in the meantime, exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within.

"He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for the naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

"He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

"He has made judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

"He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers, to harass our people and eat out their substance.

"He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures.

"He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power

"He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions, and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

"For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

"For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

"For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

"For imposing taxes on us without our consent;

"For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury;

"For transporting us beyond seas, to be tried for pretended offences;

"For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instruments for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies;

"For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering, fundamentally, the forms of our governments;

"For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

"He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection, and waging war against us.

"He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

"He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries, to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

"He has constrained our fellow-citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the execu-

tioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

"He has excited domestic insurrections among us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

"In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

"Nor have we been wanting in our attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them, from time to time, of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind—enemies in war—in peace, friends.

"We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in general Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states: that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the

support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."*

The Declaration of Independence, signed only by John Hancock, the president of Congress, was printed on broadsides and in newspapers, and scattered over the land. Congress ordered it to be entered at length upon the journal, and also to be engrossed upon parchment for the members to affix their signatures to it. The latter important act was performed on the second day of August following, when fifty-four delegates were present. Two others subsequently signed it, making the whole number of the glorious band of arch-rebels in the sight of the British ministry, FIFTY-SIX.†

Although the volcanic energy, to be exerted in the future in behalf of human freedom, which lay involved in that declaration, was not appreciated nor even apparent, at that time, except by a few sagacious and half-prophetic minds, the document was hailed throughout the country with every demonstration of joy, because it was a truthful voice for the prevailing sentiments of the people. Washington welcomed it with great joy. It was received by him at headquarters, on the ninth of July, enclosed in a letter from John Hancock, who said: "Although it is not possible to foresee

* Proofs from historic records of the truth and justice of every charge contained in this declaration, may be found in the Supplement to Lossing's "Family History of the United States," p. 595.

† The delegates represented the several states as follows. *New Hampshire:* Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton. *Massachusetts:* John Hancock, John Adams, Samuel Adams, Robert Treat Paine. *Rhode Island:* Elbridge Gerry, Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery. *Connecticut:* Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott. *New York:* William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris. *New Jersey:* Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark. *Pennsylvania:* Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross. *Delaware:* Cæsar Rodney, George Read, Thomas M'Kean. *Maryland:* Samuel Chase, Thomas Stone, William Paca, Charles Carroll, of Carrollton. *Virginia:* George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton. *North Carolina:* William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn. *South Carolina:* Edward Rutledge, Thomas Hayward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton. *Georgia:* Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton.

The original parchment upon which the Declaration was written, and the above names signed, is still preserved at Washington city, but the instrument was very much injured by a writing-master named Benjamin Owen Taylor, who, in 1818, having received permission to make a fac-simile of it for publication, used some process for transferring it which came near destroying it altogether. Many of the names are illegible, and the others are quite dimmed. That precious document should never have been defiled by the touch of one who wished to use it for private gain.

the consequences of human actions, yet it is nevertheless the duty we owe ourselves and posterity, in all our public counsels, to decide in the best manner we are able, and to leave the event to that Being who controls all things, to bring about his own determinations. Impressed with this sentiment, and at the time fully convinced that our affairs may take a more favorable turn, the Congress have judged it necessary to dissolve the connection between Great Britain and the American colonies, and to declare them free and independent states, as you will perceive by the inclosed declaration, which I am directed to transmit to you, and to request you will have it proclaimed at the head of the army, in the way you shall think most proper."

Washington immediately issued the following order: "The honorable continental Congress, impelled by the dictates of duty, policy, and necessity, have been pleased to dissolve the connection which subsisted between this country and Great Britain, and to declare the United Colonies of North America, *free and independent states*. The several brigades are to be drawn up this evening on their respective parades, when the declaration of Congress, showing the grounds and reasons of this measure, will be read with an audible voice. The general hopes that this important event will serve as a fresh incentive to every officer and soldier to act with fidelity and courage, as knowing that now the peace and safety of his country depend, under God, solely on the success of our arms; and that he is now in the service of a state possessed of sufficient power to reward his merit, and advance him to the highest honors of a free country." The declaration was accordingly read that evening, and at the conclusion the soldiery gave three hearty cheers. The whole city was made vocal with songs and huzzas, and the ringing of bells; and at nine o'clock in the evening, a party of soldiers and citizens pulled down the leaden equestrian statue of George the Third, that was erected in the Bowling-green, at the foot of Broadway, in 1770, and broke it in pieces. It was afterward converted into bullets for the use of the republican army, and, as a cotemporary remarked, the ministerial troops had

"melted majesty fired at them." Washington reprimanded the soldiers on the following morning, in general orders, saying that such conduct was riotous and unbecoming the members of a disciplined army, engaged in a cause that gave no license for the exercise of vulgar passions and prejudices. This nobler feeling of the soldier, the commander-in-chief frequently appealed to; and on the very day when the riotous conduct occurred, he had said in his orders: "The general hopes and trusts, that every officer and man will endeavor so to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country."

On the tenth of July the city authorities of New York, animated by the joyous spirit of the preceding evening, proclaimed a general jail delivery for debtors; and ten days afterward, the people in a great multitude assembled to hear the declaration read from the balcony of the old city-hall, at the head of Broad street, whereon, thirteen years afterward, Washington was inaugurated the first president of the United States, in the presence of a far greater congregation. They then took the British arms from over the seat of justice in the court-room of the city-hall; also the arms wrought in stone in front of the building, and the picture of the king in the council-chamber, and destroyed them by fire, in the street. They then ordered the British arms in all the churches to be destroyed, but this measure was not carried into effect.

Thousands of hearts in the old world, beating strongly with hope for the future, were deeply impressed with this declaration of independence made by the revolted colonies. Bold men listened earnestly to the melodies of freedom that arose from every inhabited hill and valley, town and hamlet, of the old thirteen states, and catching its symphony, prolonged its glad harmony, even until it wooed sleeping slaves from their slumbers in the shadows of despotism forth to the clear light, panoplied in the armor of absolute right. The spirit of liberty in France was aroused, and turning in its bed of submission, like the Titans beneath old Ætna, to look for light and freedom, an earthquake shock ensued, which agitated thrones, crumbled feudal altars, whereon equality was daily sacrificed, and

so rent the veil of the temple of despotism, that the people plainly saw the fetters and instruments of unholy rule, huge and terrible, within the inner court. They put forth their strength, pulled down royalty, overturned distinctions, and gave the first impulse to the revolutions which have since spread from that focus, to purify the political atmosphere of Europe.

Back to our glorious manifesto of July, 1776, the struggling nations look, and when they wish to arraign their tyrants, that indictment is their text and guide. From the hour of its promulgation, it has been the admiration of statesmen in both hemispheres. "I ask," exclaimed Mirabeau, on the tribune of the national assembly of France, while descanting upon our declaration; "I ask if the powers who have formed alliances with the States have dared to read that manifesto, or to interrogate their consciences after the perusal? I ask whether there be at this day one government in Europe — the Helvetic and Batavian confederations and the British isles excepted — which, judged after the principles of the declaration of Congress on the fourth of July, 1776, is not divested of its rights?" And Napoleon afterward, alluding to the same scene said — "The finger of God was there!"

CHAPTER XV.

CRITICAL SITUATION OF THE ARMY — RIVER OBSTRUCTIONS — PASSAGE OF BRITISH SHIPS UP THE HUDSON — CANNONADING AND ALARM — WASHINGTON'S ANXIETY — DESPATCHES TO THE COUNTRY — GENERAL GEORGE CLINTON AND THE MILITIA — TROOPS IN THE HIGHLANDS — PATRIOTISM OF THE PEOPLE — THE SHIPS IN TAPPAN SEA — ANOTHER ALARM — ARRIVAL OF LORD HOWE — TORIES BANISHED — MISSION OF THE BROTHERS HOWE — THEIR DECLARATION — DE BERDT'S LETTER TO COLONEL REED — REED AND MORRIS — LORD HOWE'S LETTER TO "GEORGE WASHINGTON, ESQ." — ITS REJECTION — INTERVIEW BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND A BRITISH OFFICER — THE MILITARY TITLE OF WASHINGTON ACKNOWLEDGED — PUNCTILIO NECESSARY — RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEW — DECLARATION OF THE COMMISSIONERS PUBLISHED — DISAPPOINTMENT AND INDIGNATION OF THE PEOPLE — THE BONDS OF UNION MADE CLOSER.

THE sunlight that fell upon the army and people at New York when the Declaration of Independence was promulgated, was very soon obscured by clouds of deepest apprehension, for the situation of that army became critical and alarming when, at the middle of July, nearly all of the British land and naval forces had arrived. It lay at the confluence of two large rivers, with a broad bay in front, whereon the heaviest navy in the world, at that time, might ride at anchor; and at a little distance from it was a powerful enemy, superior in numbers and discipline, provided with armed vessels sufficient to maintain complete mastery upon the surrounding waters, and ready, at a signal to begin the havoc of war.

The Americans had no armed vessels in the harbor, and were compelled to rely upon land batteries alone for defence. This want made it expedient to devise some method immediately for obstructing the channels of the rivers, so that the ships of the enemy could not pass. As early as the eighth of the month the commander-in-chief had held a consultation with his general officers

upon the subject, when it was agreed that some hulks should be sunk in the channel of the Hudson, nearly opposite Tarrytown. But before this project could be executed the movements of the enemy caused its abandonment, for the time.

Perceiving this weakness of the Americans, General Howe resolved to make an immediate movement in the projected scheme of the ministry for taking possession of Hudson's river. For this purpose he ordered the *Rose*, of twenty guns, and the *Phœnix*, of forty guns, to penetrate that river to the Highlands, if possible. The former was commanded by Wallace, the pirate of Narraganset bay, and the latter by the considerate Captain Parker, who would not destroy the city of New York, because the "rebels" desired it! These vessels, with their tenders, left Staten Island with favorable wind and tide, on the afternoon of the twelfth of July, and sailed up the bay.

The American troops were summoned to their alarm posts, for an immediate attack upon the city was expected. When the hostile ships drew near, a brisk fire was opened upon them from the city batteries, and from Paulus's Hook (Jersey City) opposite. The ships responded with broadsides fired right and left; but neither party sustained very serious damages. The men on the vessels were shielded by ramparts of sand-bags upon the decks, while the Americans on shore were well defended by their breastworks. British balls entered a few houses; but no person was seriously injured, and the ships passed by.

The wildest excitement prevailed throughout the city during this cannonading. Many fled to the country. Weeping women and children were met at every step in the streets imploring protection, some pale and silent with fear, and others screaming and almost frantic with irrepressible terror. But the panic was temporary. Within a few hours all was quiet, for the other vessels of the enemy had not moved a cable, and there were no indications of an immediate attack.

Washington, meanwhile, had watched the whole movement with anxiety. When he saw the belligerent vessels approaching, he

sent off an express to General Mifflin, then encamped with Pennsylvania troops on Mount Washington, near the upper end of the island, advising him of the danger. At the same time, Sampson Duyckinck hastened on toward White Plains, in Westchester county, to inform the New York convention, then in session there; while a third express bore a letter from Washington to Brigadier-General George Clinton, at New Windsor, just above the Highlands.

Believing the object of the commanders of the *Rose* and *Phœnix* to be the seizure of Forts Constitution and Montgomery, in the Highlands, the commander-in-chief urged Clinton to send down for their defence, as large a number of the militia, under General Tenbroeck, as could be spared. It was fortunate for the cause that a man like Clinton was in the field. He was active, vigilant, and brave. During all the struggle between the whigs and tories in the colonial assembly of New York for several years before the kindling of the war, he had been a stanch and active friend of the people, and fought nobly side by side with Schuyler, Woodhull, the Livingstons, and other republicans, for freedom of speech and the right of representation. And the people had manifested their confidence in his ability and fidelity, by electing him a delegate to the continental Congress, where he had remained long enough to vote for the declaration of independence. Then perceiving the dangers that menaced his native province, he had hastened to assume the duties of brigadier-general of the militia of Orange and Ulster counties, to which office he had been appointed by the convention of New York seven months before.

Twenty hours before Washington's letter reached General Clinton, he had aroused the militia in his region. His brother, Colonel James Clinton, then at Fort Constitution, had heard the firing at New York, and on the morning of the thirteenth was informed of the passing of the hostile vessels. He instantly sent the voice of an alarm-gun booming through the Highlands with a well-understood message to the inhabitants above, and before noon the militia were in motion. General Clinton issued orders to three regiments to assemble. One was directed to march immediately to Fort Constitu-

tion, and another to Fort Montgomery. The third was to rendezvous at Newburg with orders to proceed to Fort Constitution when another signal should be given. All the other regiments in his brigade were directed to be in readiness to march at a moment's warning; and he despatched expresses to the owners of sloops and boats, twenty miles up the west side of the river, requesting them to haul them off so as to prevent their grounding at low tide, that they might be ready to carry the militia down to the forts, if necessary. Then, with about forty of his neighbors, the brigadier started for Fort Constitution, where they arrived early in the afternoon; and at evening he reached Fort Montgomery. He was joined there by Colonel Woodhull, with about two hundred and fifty of his regiment, and Colonel M'Claghry, with upward of five hundred of his. There he received Washington's letter of the twelfth, and in reply, on the fifteenth, he said: "The men turn out of their harvest fields to defend their country with surprising alacrity. The absence of so many of them, however, at this time, when their harvests are perishing for want of the sickle, will greatly distress the country."*

The considerate Clinton did not leave those harvest fields, the women and children who remained to reap them, and the homes of the absent, to the scourge of dusky savages then hovering upon the frontier, or the stealthy plunder and secret revenge of the tories in their midst. He ordered the colonels to leave the frontier companies at home, and as many men out of each of the other companies "as would be sufficient to guard against any attempts that might be made by internal enemies."†

Such were the prompt movements made for the defence of the highland passes. They were necessary, although the chief mission of the hostile vessels appeared to be the cutting off of supplies for the army in New York, preventing the obstruction of the channels of the river below the highlands, taking soundings, and giving aid and encouragement to the numerous tories in Westchester county. Keeping near the western shore, they passed the batteries at the

* Correspondence of the Revolution, i., 260. † Ibid. i., 262.

foot of Mount Washington, and at King's bridge, without receiving the slightest damage, and anchored in the middle of Tappan Sea, opposite Tarrytown, secure from the shots of musketeers upon the shores. There they lay for three weeks, unable to communicate with the fleet at Staten Island.

The panic created in the city by the cannonading on the afternoon of the twelfth had just subsided, and calmness begun to overspread the town, when another alarm, almost as intense, for a little while, agitated the population. Many were making their way to the water side near Fort George, to enjoy the cool breeze that came in from the ocean, at sunset, and to gaze with straining eyes toward Staten Island, where the enemy lay reposing, when suddenly the booming of heavy guns came over the bay, and a great smoke arose from the shipping on the waters near the Narrows. Spy-glasses pointed in that direction, soon discovered a heavy ship-of-the-line, under full sail, with the red cross of St. George at her peak, moving slowly and proudly into the bay, and receiving salutes from the heavy cannon of the men-of-war at anchor there as she passed by. It was the flag-ship of the admiral, just arrived from Halifax; and soon the cry of "Lord Howe has come!" went from lip to lip, throughout the city, and was borne as upon wings by couriers who hastened to the country. All felt that a crisis had now arrived—that the question whether peace or war, submissive slavery or freedom, justice or oppression, should be the experience of the American people, must now be speedily settled.

The arrival of Lord Howe gave evident joy to the tories, and Washington, profiting by the lessons of the late conspiracy among them, and well knowing that not only the city, but the neighboring rural districts abounded with loyalists, resolved to have the leaders then in jail, sent into the interior, where they could do no harm. He accordingly addressed a letter to the committee of secrecy, which had been appointed by the New York provincial Congress in May,* to act specially in matters concerning internal enemies,

* The committee consisted of Messrs. Scott, Morris, Cuyler, Wickham, and Colonel Remsen. They were to "confer and advise with the commander-in-chief on all such matters relative to the

urging them to take immediate steps for their banishment. "In case of an attack and alarm," he said, "there could be no doubt what part they [the tories] would take, and none can tell what influence they might have."

The committee were then sitting in New York, and they acted upon Washington's suggestions without delay. Thirteen of the most obnoxious tories were removed by order of the convention, to the Litchfield jail, in Connecticut. Among these was Mayor Mathews (who was sent in charge of Abraham De Peyster), toward whom the republican authorities were disposed to be lenient, as his conduct had not been as offensive as that of the others. The Litchfield committee were requested to treat him with as much indulgence as the security of his person, until he should be tried, would permit, and he was accordingly allowed to board in a private family, and to enjoy a good deal of freedom.*

The wisdom of Washington's policy in sending away these influential tories, was immediately apparent. Lord Howe, as we have observed, came with ample powers as a peace commissioner, to act conjointly with his brother in effecting a reconciliation between Great Britain and her colonies, upon a specific basis; and immediately after his arrival he endeavored to enter upon the duties of that laudable mission, by communicating with the colonial governors, the people, and the commander-in-chief of the American armies. On his passage he had written a circular letter to all the governors, supposing them to be yet in power, and also a declaration to the people, setting forth the authority of the commissioners, as the king's representatives, and the proposed terms of reconciliation. In that declaration he offered strength to the loyalists by

execution of his office, as he shall choose to mention or communicate to them." This scope of duties was broad, but it was understood that their chief business was to observe the movements of all disaffected persons, and prevent traitorous machinations.—Journal of the Provincial Congress of New York, page 450.

* "Ever since my arrival here," Mathews wrote to his wife, "I have been at the house of Captain Moses Seymour, who, together with his wife, have behaved in the most genteel, kind manner, and have done everything in their power to make my time as agreeable as possible. They have nothing of the Yankee about them."

Mathews carried with him, to Connecticut, the mayoralty flag of New York city, and a flag of one of the loyalists battalions. These are now (1858) in possession of a gentleman in Charlestown, Massachusetts

inviting individuals and communities, who, "in the tumult and disorder of the times, may have deviated from their just allegiance," to return to their duty, receive a free pardon, and "reap the benefits of the royal favor." They also declared that "due consideration shall be had to the meritorious services of all persons who shall aid and assist in restoring the public tranquillity;" that "pardons shall be granted, dutiful representations received, and every suitable encouragement given, for promoting such measures as shall be conducive to the re-establishment of legal government and peace, in pursuance of his majesty's most gracious purpose." This declaration was signed by the commissioners, and attested by Governor Tryon, and Willett, sheriff of Queens county. The latter was soon afterward arrested for the act, by order of the New York convention.

Before attempting to communicate with the people, Lord Howe sought a correspondence with Washington. He had held conferences with friends of America in England, before his departure, for he seems to have been sincerely desirous for a reconciliation, and wished to know their views. Among others was Dennis De Berdt, brother-in-law of Joseph Reed, Washington's adjutant-general, who appears to have been perfectly captivated by Howe. He wrote a letter to Reed on the subject of the commission, which was borne across the ocean by Howe himself; and when, on his arrival, he was informed that Reed was at headquarters in New York, he sent the letter to him, unopened.

That letter was an important one. Mr. De Berdt was a son of a former agent for the colonies in England, and was well known as a stanch friend of the republicans. In his letter he urged Mr. Reed and his friends to receive the commissioners in a friendly manner, and effect a reconciliation, if possible. "Do, my dear friend," he said, "let me persuade you that Lord Howe goes to America as a mediator, and not as a destroyer. I firmly believe it, upon my honor.... As a man, he has quiet urbanity and great goodness of heart to recommend him; as a politician, solid sense and sound principles with moderation; and as a commissioner, ability and valor."

Mr. Reed read this letter to Washington, and also communicated a copy to the Congress, and to Robert Morris. The latter was accompanied by one from himself, in which he expressed a desire for reconciliation, but could not see how a conference with the commissioners could lead to that result, for he said he had no idea, from anything he had seen or could learn, that if they should give the general and admiral a full and fair hearing, the proposition would amount to anything short of unconditional submission. And he regarded the declaration of independence, just adopted, as a serious obstacle in the way of entering upon negotiations.

Morris thought so too. He, with Dickenson and others, had uniformly opposed the declaration, as premature, for it shut the door against the reconciliation so much desired, and compelled many doubtful but sincere friends of the cause to side with the crown. Yet he signed it, and took his share of the fearful responsibility, saying: "I think that the individual who declines the service of his country because its councils are not conformable to his ideas, makes but a bad subject; a good one will follow if he can not lead."* He was favorable to negotiation, because he thought it would have a salutary effect upon the people. "If they can offer peace on admissible terms," he said, "I believe the great majority of America would still be for accepting it. If they can only offer *pardons*, and that is fully ascertained, it will firmly unite all America, in their exertions to support the independency they have declared." These were the sentiments of a true statesman and patriot, and a majority of the Congress held similar views, as we shall observe presently.

On the afternoon of the fourteenth of July, Lord Howe, then on board the *Eagle*, sent a letter to Washington, by a flag. The commander-in-chief had been apprized of the appearance of the flag down the bay, and his experience in correspondence with Generals Howe and Gage, at Boston, assured him that he would be addressed as a private gentleman, because the ministry did not recognise the Congress, from whom he had derived his commission, as a legal

* Morris to Reed, July 20, 1776.

body, competent to confer military titles. He, therefore, held a consultation with his general officers then not on other duty, and it was agreed, that he ought not to receive a letter unless it was addressed to him as a commanding general. When this point was settled, he directed his adjutant-general, Colonel Reed, to go down the bay in a barge, meet the flag, and manage the affair under the general instructions just discussed. Colonel Samuel Webb, Washington's aid-de-camp, accompanied him.

The flag was borne by Lieutenant Brown, a British naval officer, who was politely received by Reed, half way between Governor's and Staten islands. After a cordial salutation, Brown said he had a letter from Lord Howe to Mr. Washington. Colonel Reed told him that he knew no such person in the American army. The astonished lieutenant drew out a letter, addressed to "George Washington, Esq.," and offered it to Reed. The latter said he could not receive a letter to the general under such a direction. The lieutenant expressed surprise and concern, and remarked that the letter was rather of a civil than of a military nature. He also remarked that Lord Howe had expressed his regret that he had not arrived sooner; that he and his brother were clothed with extraordinary powers; and he wished much that the letter could be received without such strict attention to punctilio. But Colonel Reed was inexorable, and they parted. Very soon the British officer hailed the retiring Americans, when they met again. "He then asked me," says Reed, "under what title the *general*—catching himself—*Mr.* Washington chose to be addressed." Reed replied that his station in the army was well known, that the matter had been discussed the previous year, and that he supposed the admiral could not be ignorant of what had passed. The lieutenant again expressed his disappointment and regret, when they parted.*

Referring to this matter, in a letter to the president of Congress, Washington said: I would not upon any occasion sacrifice essentials to punctilio; but in this instance, the opinion of others concurring with my own, I deemed it a duty to my country and my appoint-

* Colonel Reed to Mr. Petit, July 15, 1776.

ment, to insist upon that respect, which, in any other than a public view, I would willingly have waived. Nor do I doubt, but, from the supposed nature of the message, and the anxiety expressed, they will either repeat their flag, or fall upon some mode to communicate the import and consequence of it." The Congress highly approved of Washington's conduct, and after declaring that he "acted with a dignity becoming his station," directed that no letter or message should be received by him or any of the commanders in the army, "but such as shall be directed to them in the characters they repectively sustain."*

According to Washington's expectation, another attempt of the commissioners to communicate with him, was made a few days afterward. On the morning of the nineteenth, an aid-de-camp of General Howe came up the bay with a flag, and was met by Colonels Reed and Webb. He desired to know whether Colonel Patterson, adjutant-general of the British army, could be admitted to an interview with "his excellency, General Washington." Colonel Reed, in the name of his commander-in-chief, immediately consented, and assured him that the adjutant-general would be cordially received and safely returned. The time fixed for the interview was the following morning; and, at the appointed hour, Colonels Reed and Webb, in the general's barge, met the flag from General Howe about two miles from the town, and took Colonel Patterson on board. The usual blindfolding on such occasions was dispensed with, and the whole party landed near the Grand battery, passed through the general's Life-Guards, and proceeded to the quarters of General Knox, where the British officer was introduced to Washington. They held a conference for half an hour.

Colonel Patterson addressed Washington by the title of *your excellency*, and very politely endeavored to explain the superscription of the letter from Admiral Howe, citing as an excuse the fact, that nearly a year before, Washington had addressed a letter "To the Honorable William Howe, Esq." He assured Washington that no disrespect was intended by the omission of his title, and that

* Journals of Congress, July 17, 1776.

both Lord and General Howe exceedingly lamented that there should be any misunderstanding that should interrupt the frequent intercourse between the two armies, which the service might require. He then drew out the same letter (but did not offer it) that was sent on the fourteenth, addressed to "George Washington, Esq., &c., &c.," and expressed a hope that the et ceteras, which implied everything, would remove all impediments. Washington declined receiving it, remarking that the et ceteras also implied anything; and remarked that his letter to General Howe the previous year was in reply to one similarly addressed to himself, by that officer. He then informed Colonel Patterson, that he should absolutely decline any letter directed to him as a private person, when it related to his public station. That subject was then dropped.

When Colonel Patterson perceived that Lord Howe's letter, with that superscription, would not be accepted, he endeavored to communicate its contents, as accurately as his memory would allow. The subject of the treatment and exchange of prisoners was introduced, but as neither party had any authority to act in that matter, it was soon disposed of. Colonel Patterson then informed Washington, that the admiral and general were clothed with extraordinary powers for effecting a reconciliation; that they were very anxious to terminate the unhappy contest; and desired him to consider his visit as the first advance toward that object. Washington replied that Congress had given him no authority to act as a negotiator; but from what he could learn, the powers of the commissioners extended no further than to grant pardons; that those who had committed no fault wanted no pardon; and that the Americans were only defending what they deemed their indisputable rights. Colonel Patterson replied, that that would open a wide field for argument; and so the interview, which General Howe, in a letter to the colonial secretary, said—"was more polite than interesting," ended. "However," continued Howe, "it induced me to change my superscription for the attainment of an end so desirable; and in this view I flatter myself it will not be disapproved."

When Colonel Patterson was about to leave, Washington politely invited him to partake of a collation; but he declined, giving as an excuse, that a late breakfast made it unnecessary. He expressed his sense of the kind courtesy which he had received, especially in not being blindfolded, and was then conducted to the barge in the same open way.

While these matters of etiquette, insignificant in themselves, but of much consequence in the connection in which they appeared, were in process of adjustment, Lord Howe had sent a copy of the circular letter and declaration of the commissioners ashore at Amboy, with a flag, directed to Governor Franklin, of New Jersey, with a request that he should give the latter as much publicity as possible. These papers were forwarded to Washington by General Mercer, and by him were sent immediately to the Congress. That body directed them to be published in the several newspapers in the colonies friendly to the republican cause, that the people might see how utterly deceptive had been all the assurances and hopes, that the commissioners would come with propositions for an honorable peace—peace upon equitable and righteous terms.

"I should suppose," wrote Washington to the president of Congress, on the twenty-second of July, "the warmest advocates for dependence on the British crown must be silent, and be convinced beyond all possibility of doubt, that all that has been said about the commissioners was illusory, and calculated expressly to deceive and put off their guard, not only the good people of our own country, but those of the English nation that were averse to the proceedings of the king and ministry."

It was now palpable to all perceptions, that the commissioners came with no offers that Americans could accept, and that the whole proceeding was a trick to gain time, throw the colonists off their guard, weaken their vigilance, and allow the British government ample opportunity for preparations to crush the rebellion. In that manifesto of the commissioners, not a word was said about the removal of any oppressions complained off; of guaranties of justice in the future; nor of the independence of the colonies as an essential

basis for negotiations for peace. The Americans were treated as criminals, and instructed to feel that the great "goodness and benevolence of the king" had induced him to send his representatives to the colonies, graciously to grant *pardons* when due submission should be made!

The whole proceeding was a wicked insult to freemen, and a disgrace to the tyrannous ministry who added it to the deep injuries they had inflicted. It was an insult that the Americans would not brook. Even the lukewarm and timid regarded it in this light, and expressed their indignation; and the correctness of the opinion of Robert Morris, before cited, concerning the effect that an unfavorable proposition from the commissioners would have upon the people, was speedily confirmed. That declaration drew the bonds of union closer. All hope of reconciliation now departed for ever. The dreams of those who longed for it were dissipated; and the republicans, with strong faith, prepared for the great struggle for the freedom and independence which their representatives, on the fourth of July, had solemnly declared to be their inalienable rights.

CHAPTER XVI.

WASHINGTON'S STRENGTH UNDER DIFFICULTIES — ELEMENTS OF WEAKNESS IN THE ARMY — STRANGE APATHY OF THE PEOPLE — SLOW ENLISTMENTS — THE FLYING CAMP — CONDUCT OF A TROOP OF LIGHT HORSE — THEIR DISMISSAL — THE ENEMY WAITS FOR REINFORCEMENTS — WASHINGTON'S PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE — CO-OPERATIONS OF THE CIVIL AUTHORITY — MEASURES FOR OBSTRUCTING HUDSON'S RIVER — MOVEMENTS OF THE ROSE AND PHŒNIX — INTENTIONS OF THEIR COMMANDERS — COUNTERACTING MEASURES BY GENERAL CLINTON — PREPARATIONS OF FIRE-SHIPS TO DESTROY THE BRITISH VESSELS — THE ROSE AND PHŒNIX ATTACKED BY ROW-GALLEYS — RIVER OBSTRUCTIONS AT FORT WASHINGTON — THE ROSE AND PHŒNIX ATTACKED BY FIRE-SHIPS — THEIR RETREAT TO THE FLEET.

WASHINGTON'S administrative and executive powers were now called into the most intense action. When he surveyed with acute perception, the whole field of his duty, as the commander-in-chief of an army upon which rested the hopes of three millions of people for deliverance from oppression, he saw imminent difficulties and dangers, such as might appal the most heroic spirit whose reliance was upon human agency alone. But never, for a moment, did the obedient nature of Washington, looking forth with the clear eye of filial faith, lose sight of the Providence of God. It was to his mind like "a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night," hovering over his camp — a Divine presence that filled him with strong assurance, even when dim-sighted reason timidly pursuaded him to sit down in despair. Within his camp were sectional jealousies and prejudices, heart-burnings and recoilings from duty, eating like canker-worms at the root of all discipline and strength; while in the northern department, where disaster had followed disaster, and yet where reposed all hope of success in defeating the ministerial scheme against the union of the colonies, by keeping Carleton and

Burgoyne and their invading army at bay, the petty ambitions of leaders, and discontents growing out of sectional prejudices, were producing wide-spread confusion and weakness.

A strange apathy, sometimes assuming the aspect of timidity, and at other times of disaffection, or, at best, of indifference, widely prevailed. The hopeful as well as the doubtful had been lulled by the siren song of *reconciliation*, and were waiting to hear the voices of the peace-makers, before leaving their fields and workshops for a camp that might be speedily dissolved. On every side the loyalists, strengthened by the presence of British arms, were exerting a powerful influence in secret, which they dared not do openly. So, when the enemy were preparing to strike a crushing blow, and when all hearts and hands friendly to the republican cause should have been zealously engaged, the enlistments went on very slowly. Toward the close of July, when reinforcements for that enemy were hourly expected, not more than five thousand of the fifteen thousand new levies ordered for the American army, were at Washington's camp, and less than ten thousand men fit for active duty were there.

The same causes, combined with official pride, kept back recruits for the flying camp, under General Mercer, whose headquarters were at Amboy, in New Jersey. It was to consist of ten thousand militia drawn from the neighboring states, but with such discouraging slowness did the levies come in, that at this hour of peril, the brave Virginian, destined too soon become a martyr, had not three thousand men under his command. This tardiness gave Washington much anxiety, but the selfishness and insubordination, and the petty local pride and independence that were now beginning to grow vigorously among those actually in camp, gave him greater uneasiness, and were the sources of many vexations.

Among the most irritating of these causes, was the conduct of a troop of Connecticut light-horse, under Colonel Thomas Seymour. At the call of Governor Trumbull for aid to expel the invaders of New York, these were raised from among the yeomanry of his state. Knowing the urgency of the case, they mounted their

horses, some taken from the pasture, and some from the plough, and without waiting to provide themselves with uniforms, or even with blankets, they hurried toward the menaced city. At that time a severe drought was parching everything in the vicinity of New York; and when they arrived at Kingsbridge, they were informed by Washington, that there was no forage for their horses, that he did not feel at liberty to furnish any at the public expense, and that there could be no possible use for cavalry in the expected conflict. The Connecticut troopers patriotically offered to serve as infantry, and to pasture their horses near Kingsbridge, at their own expense, they "being most of them, if not all, men of reputation and of property." Washington was highly pleased, and, in a letter to Governor Trumbull, and also to the president of Congress, on the eleventh of July, he spoke of them in terms of warm commendation.

But within a week a great change was wrought. "The latter part of the time," wrote Colonel Webb (a Connecticut officer, and then Washington's aid-de-camp) to Governor Trumbull, "they grew uneasy, and refused their duty as soldiers, though their services were much wanted, pleading, in excuse, that there was an express law of the colony which exempted them from doing duty separate from their horses. It was only requested that they should mount guard, which they refused." They went further, and compelled their officers to ask Washington to dismiss them from service. This was done on the sixteenth, with such explanations as the officers could give, when Washington, remembering how he had been deserted by troops from the same colony, a few months before, at an equally critical juncture, immediately complied with the demand, saying:—

"In answer to your note of this date,* I can only repeat to you what I said last night, and that is, that if your men think themselves exempt from the common duty of the soldier—will not mount guard, do garrison duty, or service separate from their horses—they can no longer be of any use here, where horse can

* July 16, 1776.

not be brought to action, and I do not care how soon they are dismissed."*

The warmth manifested by Washington, in this note, appears to have been justified by the occasion. He greatly needed the services of these men, and had already, in conversation with their officers, made every concession to their claims that care for the discipline of his army would allow. They would not yield; and in a letter to the president of Congress next day, he said: "Though their assistance is much needed, and might be of essential service in case of an attack, yet I judged it advisable, on their application and claim of such indulgence, to discharge them; as granting them would set an example to others, and might produce many ill consequences." Colonel Seymour was mortified; and when he returned home, he generously wrote a long letter to Governor Trumbull in extenuation of the conduct of his troops, whose course, at a less critical time, might have been defended with some plausibility. We shall soon have occasion to consider other difficulties and vexations of a similar nature, to which Washington was subjected.

It soon became evident to the commander-in-chief that the cautious Howes would not attack the Americans until reinforcements should arrive. Troops from England, and a large body of German mercenaries, under General De Heister, were daily expected. Meanwhile the British army and navy lay in comparative idleness at Staten Island. But Washington was extremely active and vigilant, and no moment was lost, nor effort spared, in making preparations to receive the enemy. The works near Brooklyn were pushed forward toward completion as fast as possible, and Mifflin carried on the fortifications upon Mount Washington with vigor. The works at Kingsbridge were strengthened; and upon the summit of the Palisades (a wall of perpendicular trap-rock which forms the western shores of the Hudson for twenty-five miles above the city of New York), another fortification was built. The former was called Fort Washington; and the latter, which was almost opposite, was named first Fort Constitution, and afterward Fort Lee.

* American Archives, 5th series, i., 371.

The civil authorities of the state, sensible of the impending danger, worked in faithful and energetic co-operation with the military. The New York convention was then sitting at White-plains, twenty-five miles from the city, but were in constant communication with the commander-in-chief. When the *Rose* and *Phœnix* went up Hudson's river, and an immediate conflict was apprehended, many leading men thought it expedient for the American army to evacuate New York city, because of its supposed inability to defend it. So thought the convention, and on the fifteenth of July, they resolved that if Washington should be of the same mind, and abandon the city "for the preservation of the state," withdrawing his troops "to the north side of Kingsbridge," they would cheerfully co-operate with him. Washington thanked them for this proof of their determination to afford him assistance, and remarked: "It is impossible to say *what may be* necessary, but I shall conduct myself as the exigencies of the case may require."

On the sixteenth the convention appointed a secret committee,* for the purpose of devising means "for obstructing the channel of Hudson's river, or annoying the enemy's ships in their navigation up said river." Munitions of war were sent to Tarrytown, while the republican yeomanry of Westchester county, under the zealous Colonel Pierre Van Cortlandt, were stationed along the shores from Dobbs's ferry to Peekskill. From Tappen to Stony Point, on the western shore, Colonel Udny Hay, with his regiment, kept watch and ward with sleepless vigilance; and upon all the heights from Paulus's Hook and Kingsbridge, to the Highlands, sentinels were posted, who watched every movement of the hostile vessels, and reported to the commander-in-chief.

The New York convention also resolved to call out one fourth of the militia of the counties of Westchester, Duchess, Ulster, and Orange, for the defence of the state, to be stationed in the Highlands and "in the vicinity below, to guard the defiles." On the nomination of Washington, General George Clinton was appointed

* The committee consisted Messrs. Jay, Yates, Tappen, R. R. Livingston, and Paulding.

to their command, and soon afterward, he made his headquarters at Peekskill, just at the lower entrance to the Highlands.

Meanwhile the movements of the *Rose* and *Phœnix* had created much uneasiness in the minds of the republicans, notwithstanding they had lain quietly at anchor most of the time, on the bosom of Tappen Sea and Haverstraw bay, only changing their positions occasionally so as to keep out of musket-shot range of the militia on the shores. But officers went out from them daily, in armed boats, to take soundings; and at night the oars of their barges were heard in many directions, while small shallops came from mysterious moorings to visit them, doubtless with food and information from tories on shore. At length the invading vessels became bolder, and one of the tenders ran up to within three miles of Fort Montgomery, where General Clinton lay with over six hundred of the militia of Orange and Ulster counties. The enemy made soundings all the way, and was engaged in that business when Clinton hurled a thirty-two pound shot at the tender, which pierced through her quarter, and rendered a retreat prudent. She took shelter behind the point of the Donderberg; and after her crew had plundered and burned the cabin of a poor man, retreated to the shipping below.

On the following day, the *Rose*, with the same tender, ran up to within long cannon-shot of Fort Montgomery. Captain Wallace, at the head of a marauding party, gallantly attacked, plundered, and burned another poor man's cabin. Wallace's "share of the plunder," wrote General Clinton to Washington, "was a handkerchief full of salad, and a pig so very poor, that a crow would scarcely deign to eat it."

The two ships and their tenders now ran up to within six miles of Fort Montgomery, and General Clinton believed that they intended to penetrate beyond the Highlands for marauding purposes, and giving encouragement to the tories above. A prisoner who escaped from the *Rose* by swimming, confirmed this opinion, and said Wallace was very much disappointed because he was not joined by at least five hundred loyalists, well supplied with stock

of every kind, as he had been led to expect. He also informed Clinton that the enemy intended to slip by the Highland forts some dark night, sail up to Poughkeepsie, destroy the continental vessels on the stocks there, and devastate the country around. To prevent these movements, Clinton augmented his garrison at Fort Montgomery to one thousand men, placed seven hundred militia in Fort Constitution, and prepared materials for lighting beacon-fires along the bold, rocky shores in the neighborhood of Fort Montgomery, when the vessels should attempt to pass. Watchful sentinels were kept on guard night and day to light the beacons, whose blaze would expose the ships, while from the fort, lying in darkness, destructive vollies from artillery and musketry might be poured upon them from the bosom of deep gloom.

Among other offensive measures planned by Washington, was a simultaneous attack upon the British fleet by fire-ships, and upon the land forces of the enemy on Staten Island by troops from Mercer's flying-camp, and others under Major Knowlton, at Bergen. Captain Ephraim Anderson, adjutant of one of the Jersey battalions, who, in the spring, had attempted to burn the British shipping at Quebec,* had recently submitted to the Congress a scheme for destroying the fleet before New York, and with their approval he hastened to the headquarters of the army. Washington was pleased with his proposition, and Anderson immediately commenced the construction of fourteen fire-ships. He worked with eagerness, for his reputation and promotion were at stake, and at the close of the month, he wrote to the president of Congress that he had completed two vessels. "In my next," he said, "I hope to give you a particular account of a general conflagration, as everything in my power shall be exerted in the demolition of the enemy's fleet. I expect to take an active part, and be an instrument for that purpose. I am determined (God willing) to make a conspicuous figure among them, by being a 'burning and

* John Jay, in a letter to the president of Congress on the sixth of July, gave an amusing account of General Wooster's preparations to destroy the enemy's fleet at Quebec with fire-rafts.—See American Archives, Fifth Series, i., 40.

shining light,' and thereby serve my country and have the honor of meeting the approbation of Congress."

But a sufficient number of fire-ships and attendant galleys could not be constructed before the enemy was reinforced, and was making preparations for actual invasion; and prudence forbade the contemplated attack upon the land forces from the Jersey shore. So the whole scheme was abandoned. Mercer and Knowlton did, indeed, attempt a night attack on two occasions, but were prevented, first by a storm, and next by a deficiency of boats.

Meanwhile the obstructions in Hudson's river, and the destruction of the piratical vessels in its waters, occupied the attention of the commander-in-chief and the civil authorities of the state. The obstructions near Fort Washington were made under the direction of General Putnam, and his nephew, Colonel Rufus Putnam;* and the New York convention sent the secret committee up to the Highlands, to consult with General Clinton on the same subject. It was proposed to stretch a boom and iron chain obliquely across the river from Fort Montgomery to the base of the high promontory called Anthony's Nose; fire-rafts already constructed at Poughkeepsie, were ordered down to the fort; and armed whale-boats were stationed in the coves between Peekskill and Tappan Sea, to watch the pirates, and to cut off all communication between them and the shore. At the request of the convention, Captain Hazelwood (distinguished for his operations on the Delaware the following year), who had been sent to New York by the Philadelphia committee of safety, went to Poughkeepsie, twenty miles above the Highlands, to superintend the construction of fire-ships.†

* "We are preparing *chevaux-de-frise*," wrote Putnam on the twenty-sixth of July, "at which we make great despatch by the help of ships which are to be sunk — a scheme of mine which you may be assured is very simple; a plan of which I send you. The two ships' sterns lie toward each other, about seventy feet apart. Three large logs, which reach from ship to ship are fastened to them. The two ships and logs stop the river two hundred and eighty feet. The ships are to be sunk, and when hauled down on one side, the pricks will be raised to a proper height, and they must, inevitably, stop the river, if the enemy will let us sink them. — Putnam to Gates.

† Captain Hazelwood appears to have performed his duty very satisfactorily. Tappen and Livingston, two of the secret committee, wrote to the convention on the twenty-sixth of August, from Poughkeepsie, that he had "fitted a fire-vessel in a masterly manner;" and on the twenty-eighth, the convention voted that he was entitled to their thanks, and a compensation of three hundred

Having abandoned the project of an attack upon the British fleet, Washington ordered the two fire-vessels that were finished, to go up the Hudson and destroy the *Rose* and *Phœnix*. Six row-galleys,* under the general command of Colonel Tupper, were sent up to reconnoitre their position, and to annoy them. They found them lying off Tarrytown; and early in the afternoon of the third of August, the *Lady Washington* galley received a heavy shot from the *Phœnix*. The former immediately sent one in return, and then commenced a severe conflict. The *Washington* galley, bearing the flag of Commander Tupper, approached to within grape-shot distance of the enemy, and sustained a warm contest for half an hour, when the *Spitfire* galley came to her assistance. These three, with an occasional shot from the others, fought the enemy an hour and a half longer, when severe injuries to hulls and rigging received by his little flotilla, compelled Tupper to signal a retreat. "Never," said a writer who was on board the *Washington*, "did men behave with more firm, determined spirit, than our little crews. One of our tars, being mortally wounded, cried to his messmates—'I am a dying man; revenge my blood, my boys, and carry me alongside my gun, that I may die there.' We were so preserved by a gracious Providence, that in all our galleys (which consisted of six) we had but two men killed and fourteen wounded, two of which are thought dangerous."

The little flotilla returned to New York to prepare for another attack, and that night four ships, chained and boomed, with a number of heavy *chevaux-de-frise*, according to the plan of General Putnam, were sunk in the channel near Fort Washington, while others were prepared for the same destination.

Just at evening on the sixteenth of August, two fire-ships, commanded respectively by Captains Fosdyke and Thomas, "gentlemen volunteers of rank in the army of the United States," sailed up the Hudson to attack the British vessels. The night was very dark

pounds sterling for his services "in preparing fire-rafts, and giving useful information relative to the obstructing the navigation of Hudson's river."

* Two of these row-galleys had been sent to Washington by Governor Trumbull.

and rainy, and they passed the *Phœnix* without seeing her, but Captain Thomas fell upon one of the tenders and consumed her. The light of the burning vessel revealed the *Phœnix*. The *Rose* was not then visible. Fosdyke immediately grappled the *Phœnix*, but before he could set her on fire she was dexteriously disengaged and preserved. In the affray Captain Thomas was lost; how, no one could tell, as he was never seen after the first attack upon the tender.

Wallace and Parker now thought it prudent to retreat while an opportunity offered, and just before dawn, on the morning of the eighteenth, they took advantage of a favorable wind and tide, and a heavy rain, and went down the river, keeping close under the eastern shore to avoid the heavy guns at Fort Washington. Unfortunately the obstructing ships and *chevaux-de-frise* were not all sunken, and the pirates passed through the remaining opening without very serious injury, under the guidance of a deserter. They were somewhat damaged by well-directed shots from the upper batteries, near Fort Washington, and from others near the city; but they ran the gauntlet well, fired grape-shot incessantly, but harmlessly, while passing the city, and, followed far down the bay by galleys, which played upon them briskly, they reached the British fleet in safety, after an absence of five weeks.*

This retreat gave much joy to the republicans of the river counties, and cast a corresponding gloom over the hopes of the tories of that region.

* General Heath, then with Mifflin at Fort Washington, reported that the *Phœnix* was three times hulled by the shot, and the tender once; and the *Rose* was hulled once by a shot from Burdett's ferry, on the New Jersey shore. The wreck of the tender that was burnt was dragged to the shore on the day after the engagement, by a lieutenant and two men, in the face of a cannonade from the piratical vessels, and a six-pound cannon, three smaller ones, and ten swivels were taken out of her

CHAPTER XVII.

ARRIVAL OF THE WHOLE BRITISH FORCE — THE TWO ARMIES COMPARED — SITUATION OF THE AMERICANS — MATERIALS OF THEIR ARMY — SECTIONAL PREJUDICES AND DANGEROUS DISCORDS — WASHINGTON'S ORDERS CONCERNING THEM — HIS ANXIETY ABOUT THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT — ITS CONDITION — THE COMMANDERS THERE — PREJUDICES AGAINST GENERAL SCHUYLER — CHARACTER OF GATES — HIS APPOINTMENT TO COMMAND IN CANADA — HIS DICTATORIAL POWERS — DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN SCHUYLER AND GATES ABOUT COMMAND — APPEAL TO CONGRESS — DECISION IN FAVOR OF SCHUYLER — APPARENT SATISFACTION OF ALL — GATES'S DISCONTENT — CROWN POINT ABANDONED — CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND GATES — MOUNT INDEPENDENCE FORTIFIED — ARNOLD AND HIS NAVAL PREPARATIONS.

Before the middle of August the British reinforcements had all arrived at Staten Island, and General Howe found himself in command of between twenty-five and thirty thousand men. This force consisted of his own army from Halifax; additional troops from England; quite a large number of Hessians; several regiments from Florida and the West Indies; the detachments under Clinton and Cornwallis, conveyed by Sir Peter Parker's squadron from South Carolina; and a motley collection of white men and negroes, brought by Lord Dunmore from Virginia. The fleet was also numerous and well equipped with men and munitions of war; and the whole armament for both services, was amply supplied with all kinds of military stores.

The American army, under Washington, was quite inferior in numbers, equipments, and discipline. On the seventh of August, it nominally amounted to seventeen thousand two hundred and twenty-five men, of whom only ten thousand five hundred and fourteen were present, fit for duty, a large number being sick, absent on furlough, or on command. A great proportion of those

in active service were raw militia, drawn suddenly from their occupations, unused to the fatigues of camp duty, and utterly ignorant of military discipline; and these were divided, and stationed at different posts from Kingsbridge to Brooklyn, over a line of at least fifteen miles. This extended line of batteries and guard-posts was necessary, for besides the domestic enemies at the door of every republican, there were accessible points for the open enemy, in the field and on the water, to make an attack.

Never was an army situated where more active and sleepless vigilance was necessary, than the troops under Washington at this time. He was assured that the enemy would attack New York and Long Island within a week. He well knew the peril that menaced him; and he sent urgent letters in various directions, calling for reinforcements. To Governor Trumbull he said, after giving him an account of the state of his army, and calling for aid: "To trust altogether in the justice of our cause, without our utmost exertions, would be tempting Providence." The patriotic governor at once responded, by ordering out fourteen regiments of his state militia. Three thousand of these marched immediately for New York, under Brigadier-General Oliver Wolcott, accompanied by many volunteers.

The New York convention called out the militia of the four counties already named, and three thousand of them were soon assembled at Kingsbridge, under Brigadier-General George Clinton. Four continental battalions, composed chiefly of the best men of the state, had come from Pennsylvania, under the command of Colonels Shee, St. Clair, Wayne, and Magaw; and from the same state were two choice provincial regiments, commanded by Colonels Miles and At Lee. From Delaware came a fine corps, led by Colonel Haslet; and from Virginia, some excellent marksmen under Major Leitch. And in response to a call given by Washington, for two thousand men from the flying camp, General Mercer sent, as a part of them, the superb Maryland regiment, dressed in buff and blue, commanded by Colonel Smallwood.

Here, then, was an army, respectable in numbers, but full of the

elements of dissolution. Common danger and a common cause formed the only bond of union between them. They were collected from various parts of the country, with very little knowledge of the peculiarities of each; and their prejudices were unhappily fostered by a spirit of jealousy plainly manifested by many of the officers. The pride, and haughty demeanor, and love of show that characterized the old cavaliers, prevailed among the troops below the Delaware, and they looked with ill-concealed contempt upon the puritanical, plain-mannered, and quaintly-clad yeomen—"substantial farmers"—from New England. These were made objects of ridicule by the Pennsylvanians and those south of them; yet Captain Alexander Graydon, then a young subaltern in Shee's regiment, who, from his own account in his "Memoir of a Life" (his own), shared largely in these sectional feelings, and no doubt often engendered bitterness of heart by his freedom of contemptuous speech, was compelled, after satirizing the dress, and arms, and uncouth manners of Colonel Seymour's Connecticut light-horse,* to say: "But notwithstanding the unwarlike guise of the troops from New England, there was no part of the continent, perhaps, in which so little impression could be made, or in which the enemy was so cautious of advancing." No more forcible words of praise for patriotism and courage than these could have been uttered.

* Graydon ("Memoir," page 136) says of the light-horse: "These consisted of a considerable number of old-fashioned men, probably farmers and heads of families, as they were generally middle-aged, and many of them apparently beyond the meridian of life. They were truly irregulars; and whether their clothing, their equipments, or caparisons were regarded, it would have been difficult to have discovered any circumstance of uniformity." Some of them were dressed in "dingy regimentals of scarlet, with a triangular, tarnished, laced hat," and appeared, says Graydon, as if they might have been "the identical men who had in part composed Pepperel's army at the taking of Louisburg." He then ridicules their style of marching, et cetera; and concludes his ungenerous sketch by saying: "I have in vain endeavored to account for the very few gentlemen and men of the world, that at this time appeared in arms from this country [New England], which might be considered the cradle of the revolution. There were some, indeed, in the higher ranks; and here and there a young man of decent breeding in the capacity of an aid-de-camp, or brigade-major; but anything above the condition of a clown, in the regiments we came in contact with, was truly a rarity." This contemptuous feeling openly manifested by other troops, no doubt irritated the New Englanders exceedingly; and the bitterness shown in the remark of Colonel Seymour, in his letter to Governor Trumbull, in defence of his corps, was no doubt caused by ridicule from the proud, city-bred young officers, who filled the principal stations in the southern corps: "This I do know," he said, "that it is a general observation, both in camp and country, if the butterflies and coxcombs were away from the army, we should not be put to so much difficulty in obtaining men of common sense to engage in defence of their country."

Ridicule and disrespectful language indulged in by the officers, was naturally followed by the soldiers, and the evil consequences of irritation, discord, and alienation were so clearly foreseen by Washington, that in one of the orders of the day, referring to this matter, he said: "The general most earnestly entreats the officers and soldiers to consider the consequences; that they can no way assist our enemies more effectually than by making divisions among ourselves; that the honor and success of the army, and the safety of our bleeding country, depend upon harmony and good agreement with each other; that the provinces are all united to oppose the common enemy, and all distinctions sink in the name of an American. To make this name honorable, and to preserve the liberty of our country, ought to be our only emulation; and he will be the best soldier and the best patriot, who contributes most to this glorious work, whatever his station, or from whatever part of the continent he may come. Let all distinctions of nations, countries, and provinces, therefore, be lost in the generous contest, who shall behave with the most courage against the enemy, and the most kindness and good humor to each other. If there be any officers or soldiers so lost to virtue and a love of their country, as to continue in such practices after this order, the general assures them, and is authorized by Congress to declare to the whole army, that such persons shall be severely punished and dismissed from the service with disgrace."

This combined appeal and threat had a salutary effect, yet the evil was not eradicated, and it was found necessary to keep the soldiers from each of the provinces as much as possible together, and under command of officers from the state to which they respectively belonged.

While these dangerous elements were at work in Washington' camp, he was made exceedingly anxious by the aspect of affairs at the North. Next in importance to a victory over the enemy before him, was the preservation of northern New York from invasion. Able officers and brave and enduring men were there, but clashing personal interests and sectional differences, promised

the most disastrous consequences. "We dare not even hope for good news from Canada," wrote Adjutant-General Reed, late in July. "A sickly, beaten, and dispirited army—quarrelling generals—provincial jealousies—and disputes added to a most incredible waste or embezzlement of all stores and provisions, leave us so little chance of success, that we dread the sight of a letter or express from thence."

General Schuyler, the chief commander in the North, was suffering almost constantly with bodily sickness, and was compelled to be absent, much of the time, from the most important posts of duty on the lakes. At the same time, the responsibility was laid upon him of not only directing the movements of the broken army in camp and field, and supplying their wants, but also the performance of delicate and important services, in keeping restless Indian tribes, whose stronger passions were continually ministered to by the enemy, in a state of passive neutrality, if nothing more.

General Gates was there, clothed with strong powers by the Congress, as commander of the army while in Canada, but disappointed in his expectations; assuming equal if not superior rank with Schuyler; proud, vain, and imperious, and strongly moved by the emotions of thwarted ambition. General Arnold was there, too, full of aspirations for personal renown; restive under restraints; irritated by supposed wrongs; and alienating many by his rudeness of speech and offensive manners. And Sullivan, brave and ambitious, and sorely grieved by recent disasters, was superseded in command by Gates, until lately his inferior in rank, without the least intimation from Congress that his competence was questioned by them. He was beloved by his men, and his presence in the department was of great importance. Smarting under the implied censure, he had received the reluctant consent of General Schuyler to leave the army, in order to wait on the commander-in-chief and the Congress, to resign his commission.

Such was the relative position of the chief leaders of that northern army, which had for months suffered the most severe hardships

and humiliating reverses, while everything, especially in the commissariat, was in the utmost confusion.

The first serious difficulty on account of rank occurred on the arrival of Gates at Albany, at the close of June. The prejudices of the New England people against General Schuyler, to which we have already alluded, had produced a small but influential faction in the Congress opposed to him, and no opportunity to disparage him in the estimation of that body, was unimproved by his enemies. The recent reverses in Canada were adroitly charged by them to his alleged utter lack of military genius and soldierly qualities; to his selfishness and indolence; his tyranny and cowardice; and some, more unscrupulous, had the effrontry to question his probity and patriotism. The representations made to Congress by the inefficient Wooster, heightened the impressions which these insinuations had made, and many of the delegates, unacquainted with the sterling character, and uninformed of the arduous and eminent services of Schuyler, began to feel the necessity of another commander in the northern department.

The ambitious Gates, meanwhile, was doubtless fostering this feeling of discontent. Like Lee, he was a soldier of fortune; possessed a most exalted idea of his own military genius; was equally eager for the highest command, but was more discreet. His courtly address, his suavity of manners, his adroitness in flattering personal and sectional pride, and his tact in magnifying himself, had won the admiration of the New England delegates in Congress, while those from Virginia, where he had fixed his residence, were naturally his friends.

Being at the seat of the federal government, as we have seen, on an errand for Washington concerning affairs in the North, at the moment when those affairs appeared most gloomy, Gates had a rare opportunity to advance his own interests, and without doubt he improved it fully. Washington, yet unsuspicious of the ingratitude and other meaner qualities which formed a part of Gates's character, reposed the most generous confidence in him, and requested him "to suggest such hints of his own as he might appre-

hend material," about "measures necessary to be adopted at that alarming crisis."* The result was, that on the seventeenth of June the Congress resolved to send "an experienced general into Canada," with dictatorial powers for three months, greater by far than had yet been intrusted even to the commander-in-chief;† and then withholding the usual courtesy of requesting that chief to nominate an officer for the service, they immediately resolved: "That General Washington be directed to send Major-General Gates into Canada, to take command of the forces in that province."

On the following day, John Adams wrote a congratulatory letter to Gates, saying: "We have ordered you to the post of honor, and made you dictator in Canada for six months, or at least until the first of October."‡ Elbridge Gerry, another delegate from Massachusetts, wrote to him a week later, assuring him, that in consequence of the want of "an experienced officer to take command" in Canada, his appointment was considered "a happy circumstance."‖ And Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, said to Washington, in referring to Gates: "His great ability and virtue will be absolutely necessary to restore things there, and his recommendations will always be readily complied with. You will find that great powers are given to the commander in that distant department."§

* Washington to the President of Congress

† Power was given him "to appoint a deputy adjutant-general, a deputy muster-master-general, and such other officers as he shall find necessary for the good of the service, and to fill up vacancies in the army in Canada, and notify the same to Congress for their approbation; that he also have power to suspend any officer there till the pleasure of Congress be known, he giving his reasons for so doing in the orders of suspension, and transmitting to Congress, as soon as possible, the charge against such officer." These powers were not to continue beyond the first of October following.—Journal of Congress, June 17, 1776.

‡ American Archives, 5th series, i., 21. ‖ Ibid. i., 21.

§ The investing of Gates with such ample discretionary powers, while they were withheld even from Washington himself, had produced some unpleasant feelings in the army. Finally, toward the close of July, when Washington asked the board of war to appoint a committee to visit his army once a month, to fill vacancies, et cetera, and remarked that officers commanding in other departments had that power already given them, the Congress perceived their mistake, and felt it necessary to give the commander-in-chief some explanations. "The Congress are concerned to find," wrote the president, "that an opinion is entertained, that greater confidence has been placed in, and larger powers given to other commanders in that respect, than to yourself. They have in no instance, except in the late appointment of General Gates to the command in Canada, parted with the power of filling up vacancies. The great confusion and many disorders prevalent in that army, and its distance, induced Congress to lodge such a power in that general, for the limited space of three months, and only during his continuance in Canada. Should Congress ever empower its generals to fill up the vacancies in the army, they know of no one in whom they would so soon repose

Thus armed with "great powers," and supported by a strong party in Congress, Gates hastened toward Albany, full of visions of personal aggrandizement, for it was understood by himself and his friends, that he had virtually superseded General Schuyler in command, the "army in Canada" being the whole force in the northern department, except small garrisons at important posts. Therefore, when he arrived at Albany, and learned that that army had retreated across the New York frontier, he considered it still under his command, and proceeded to act accordingly.

This conduct surprised Schuyler. On Gates's arrival, he had cordially invited him to be his guest, that they might "be together as much as possible." Not dreaming that Gates would claim the control of the army, now that it was out of Canada, he offered him the command of Ticonderoga, the post of first importance in the North. This offer, and the attempt of Gates at the same time to exercise his dictatorial powers, by introducing to Schuyler, Mr. Avery, of Massachusetts, as the successor of Walter Livingston, the deputy commissary of the northern department, caused the question of chief command to be discussed between them.

Avery bore a commission from Commissary-General Trumbull, and was approved by Gates. Livingston's services, on account of his family connections as well as his own abilities, had been of the greatest importance, and Schuyler refused to accept Mr. Avery, denying the right of Trumbull to make the change without the authority of Congress. Gates acquiesced in this view of the case, in the presence of Schuyler, but afterward told Avery in private that as soon as he came to the command of the army he would employ him. This duplicity was revealed to Schuyler a few hours afterward, and gave him the first hint that Gates intended to claim the command of the troops out of Canada.

When Trumbull (whose brother, the late Colonel John Trumbull, the eminent artist, was Gates's aid-de-camp) heard of the rejection

a trust of such importance as in yourself; but future generals may make a bad use of it. The danger of the precedent, not any suspicion of their present commander-in-chief, prompts them to retain a power, that, by you, sir, might be exercised with the greatest public advantage."

of his deputy, he was greatly irritated, and wrote a letter to the general well calculated to increase his jealousy of Schuyler, and to make him discontented with his position. "You are in a cursed situation," he wrote; "your authority at an end, and commanded by a person who will be willing to have you knocked in the head, as General Montgomery was, if he can have the money-chest, &c., in his power. I expect to see you and your suite back here again."

Gates evidently felt the untenability of his claim, based on the letter of the resolution of Congress, and adroitly concealing his chagrin, agreed to refer the question of command to that body, doubtless believing that they would sustain him. A statement, approved by the contending parties, was sent to Washington by Schuyler, with the remark: "If Congress intended that General Gates should command the northern army, wherever it might be, as he assures me they did, it ought to have been signified to me, and I should then have immediately resigned the command to him, but until such intention is properly conveyed to me I never can. I must, therefore, entreat your excellency to lay this letter before Congress, that they may clearly and explicitly signify their intentions, to avert the dangers and evils that may arise from a disputed command, for after what General Gates has said, the line must be clearly drawn."* He then said—"As both General Gates and myself mean to be candid, and wish to have the matter settled without any of that chicane which would disgrace us as officers and men, we have agreed to speak plain, and to show each other what we have written to you upon the occasion, and he has, accordingly, read the whole of what I have above said."†

Washington laid the matter before Congress, but delicately forebore giving any advice or opinion. The Congress immediately considered the subject, and on the eighth of July, resolved—"That Major-General Gates be informed, that it was the intention of Congress to give him the command of the troops whilst in Canada, but that they had no design to vest him with a superior command to General Schuyler whilst the troops should be on this side Can-

* Schuyler to Washington, July 1, 1776. MS. Letter Books. † Ibid.

ada; and that the president write to Major-General Schuyler and Major-General Gates, stating this matter, and recommending to them to carry on the military operations with harmony, and in such manner as shall best promote the public service." This resolution was opposed by the New England delegation; and Roger Sherman asserted, that had the representatives of Rhode Island been present when the vote was taken, it could not have passed.*

The president of Congress, after informing General Gates tha they "had no design to divest General Schuyler of the command while the troops were on this side of Canada," assured him that they highly approved his "resolution and magnanimity, that the public service should receive no detriment from difference of opinion on the subject." And to General Schuyler he made a similar remark, and added: "A mutual confidence and good understanding are at this time essentially necessary, so that I am persuaded they will take place on all occasions between yourself and General Gates."

Schuyler assured Washington and the Congress, "that the difference in opinion between Gates and himself, had not caused the least ill-will, nor interrupted that harmony necessary to subsist between officers;" and Gates professed himself entirely satisfied. But he lacked the candor of Schuyler, and while openly professing the warmest friendship for that officer, he was secretly making insinuations calculated to undermine the public faith in his character, and to create sympathy for himself. Among other congressional friends, he wrote to Samuel Adams, and said: "I desire, if Chase is returned to Congress, he may know how much I have been deceived and disappointed in being removed from a place where I might have done the public service, and fixed in a situation [at Ticonderoga] where it is exceedingly doubtful if it will be in my power to be more than a wretched spectator of a ruined army."

This letter was evidently circulated, for soon afterward Governor Trumbull, father of the offended commissary-general, used similar lan-

* Sherman to Governor Trumbull, cited by Hamilton in his "History of the Republic of the United States," i, 226.

guage in a letter to a friend. "It is justly to be expected," he said, "that General Gates is discontented with his situation, finding himself limited and removed from the command, to be a wretched spectator of the ruin of the army, without power of attempting to save them."* Other eastern friends expressed their dissatisfaction; and Elbridge Gerry said to him plainly, in a letter written from Hartford: "We want very much to see you in the sole command in the northern department, but hope that you will not relinquish your station until a favorable opportunity shall effect it."

We have dwelt upon this dispute and the appearance of a faction in Congress devoted to the interests of General Gates, because they form a part of a subsequent conspiracy to supersede Washington in the chief command of the armies of the republic. When that conspiracy shall be considered in future pages, the relation of the events just narrated will be apparent.

The patriotic disinterestedness displayed by Schuyler, and his generous hospitality, disarmed the resentment and soothed the wounded pride of Gates for the moment, and the two generals set out from Albany as friends, to join the army and to act in concert. Something to avert a greater calamity than the forced evacuation of Canada must be done, and that quickly. Carleton and Burgoyne were at the foot of Lake Champlain, preparing for an invasion, and the shattered army under Sullivan, that had just escaped, was too weak in numbers, equipments, and supplies, to attempt resistance.

The two generals reached Crown Point on the sixth of July, where the wreck of more than a dozen battalions had just arrived. Since the beginning of May, the northern army had lost more than five thousand men by death and desertion.† Of all the spirited regiments that had entered Canada, less than six thousand men were left in the service, and full one half of them were sick. The small-pox was yet feeding, with insatiable appetite upon this remnant, and disease in almost every form claimed it daily victims.

* Trumbull to William Williams, July 26, 1776.

† General Gates to General Washington, July 16, 1776.

The army had come up the lake in leaky boats, in which the sick lay upon straw, without awnings to shelter them from the burning sun; and the healthy had fed upon salt pork and hard biscuit, while the money and the medicine chests were almost entirely exhausted. They had debarked. Some were sheltered in ragged tents, some under sheds, and others in huts formed of bushes; and almost every tenement contained a dead or dying man.

On the arrival of the generals at Crown Point, Sullivan was first informed of his being superseded in command by General Gates. That information was imparted to him with the greatest kindness and courtesy, but he felt the implied censure too deeply to remain in the service. He at once, as we have observed, obtained permission from General Schuyler to wait upon the commander-in-chief and the Congress, to resign his commission. Before his departure, he communicated to his army, through General Schuyler, his high appreciation of the services, the faithfulness, and the fortitude of his troops in all the trying scenes to which they had been exposed. This done, he left for New York, and Schuyler and Gates set about the almost hopeless task of reorganizing an army sufficient to offer successful resistance to the invaders. Already an appeal had been made to northern New England for more troops, but fear of the small-pox in camp held the militia back; and sectional discords kept the little army in confusion. "The most descriptive pen," wrote Schuyler to Washington, "can not describe the condition of our army. Sickness, disorder, and discord reign triumphant, the latter occasioned by an illiberal and destructive jealousy which unhappily subsists between the troops raised in the different colonies."

Washington, in reply, urged upon Schuyler the necessity of allaying these jealousies as speedily as possible. "Enjoin this upon the officers," he said, "and let them inculcate, and press home to the soldiery, the necessity of order and harmony among those who are embarked in one common cause, and mutually contending for all that freemen hold dear."

The fort at Crown Point was in a very dilapidated condition,

and at a council-of-war* held on the seventh of July (the day before Sullivan left the army), it was agreed that the post could not be made tenable, even by the labor of many men during the summer, and that it was expedient for the remnant of the army to continue their retreat to Ticonderoga, and take post upon and fortify an eminence opposite, on the eastern shore of the lake.† A remonstrance against this decision was drawn up and signed by twenty of the field-officers, at the head of whom were Colonels Stark and Poor, of New Hampshire, and Maxwell, of New Jersey, and this, with the proceedings of the council, was sent to Washington.

The reasons given by these inferior officers in favor of retaining and strengthening Crown Point were so cogent, that the commander-in-chief, who could not brook the idea of a further retrograde movement of the northern army, wrote to both Schuyler and Gates on the subject, deprecating the decision of their council. To Schuyler, he said: "I can not but observe—though I do not mean to encourage in the smallest degree, or to give the least sanction to inferior officers, to set up their opinions against the proceedings and councils of their superiors, knowing the dangerous tendency of such a practice—that the reasons assigned by the officers in their remonstrance appear to me forcible and of great weight. They coincide with my own ideas." To Gates he said, writing two days afterward: "Nothing but a belief that you have actually removed the army from Crown Point to Ticonderoga, and demolished the works at the former, and the fear of creating dissensions, and encouraging a spirit of remonstrating against the conduct of superior officers by inferiors, has prevented me, by advice of the general officers, from directing the post at Crown

* The council consisted of Generals Schuyler, Gates, Sullivan, Arnold, and Woedtke.

† On their way to Crown Point, the generals had left Colonel John Trumbull (who was to have been Gates's adjutant-general in Canada), with attendants, to view the eminence opposite Ticonderoga, on the Vermont shore. It is a ridge of land, forming a promontory; and Trumbull, on his arrival at Crown Point, on the sixth of July, assured the generals, that with very little labor that eminence might be so strongly fortified as to resist vastly superior numbers. It was at the point where the lake begins to expand from its narrow, river-like form; and it was thought to be the most eligible place to arrest an invasion of the enemy by water.

Point to be held, till Congress should decide upon the propriety of its evacuation." Washington had not called a council of officers upon the subject, but the general officers, and all others who were acquainted with the post, deplored the evacuation of Crown Point as a great calamity.

This implied censure, though expressed in the most friendly manner, nettled Gates. His foolish pride of opinion — that pride that lost him many laurels — was wounded; and in his reply, after giving reasons for abandoning Crown Point, he flippantly animadverted upon what he was pleased to call the "unprecedented behavior" of the members of Washington's council, "to their compeers in the northern department." They, having ample supplies at hand, he said, could make no allowance for the wants and misfortunes of others; and then, in allusion to Washington's army at New York, he sneeringly remarked: "Had we a healthy army, four times the number of the enemy, our magazines full, our artillery complete, stores of every kind in profuse abundance, with vast and populous towns and country close at hand to supply our wants, your Excellency would hear no complaints from this army; and the members of your council, our brethren and compeers, would have as little reason then, as they have now, to censure the conduct of those who are in nothing inferior to themselves."

To this ungenerous and uncalled for letter, the commander-in-chief made a calm and most dignified reply; one that would have conveyed a severe rebuke to some men. He courteously informed Gates that he was mistaken when he supposed that a council of officers had sat upon those who composed the board at Crown Point; that intelligence of the evacuation of that post had spread a general alarm, because it was believed that it was necessary, in conjunction with the naval force, to maintain the superiority over the lakes, and prevent the enemy's penetrating the country; and that no court of inquiry, or court-martial, as some had recommended, had been called, the opinions of the general officers having been expressed only in conversation. He then said he should not "take up more time upon the subject;" and in allusion

to Gates's ironical delineation of the camp at New York, he mildly remarked: "By-the-by, I wish your description perfectly corresponded with the real circumstances of this army." The pointed rebuke, in severe language, which Gates's conduct on this occasion deserved, was patriotically withheld by Washington, because the exigencies of the moment demanded every sacrifice for the promotion of harmony. In this light, how strongly in contrast do the characters of the two commanders appear!

Having resolved to leave Crown Point, no time was lost or efforts spared in preparations for forming a fortified camp near Ticonderoga. Schuyler, Gates, and Arnold arrived there on the evening of the eighth of July, and the troops, with artillery and stores, followed as speedily as possible. Schuyler was compelled to leave immediately to hold an appointed conference with the Indians at the German Flats, in the interior of the state, and the whole command devolved upon Gates.

Bringing to bear his experience and skill, Gates soon evolved order out of confusion. He put "the most disordered army that ever bore the name, into a state of regularity and defence."* The sick were sent to the head of Lake George, with proper attendants, and every hand capable of using an implement of labor was set to work.

Pursuant to the advice of Colonel Trumbull, a strong military work was commenced upon the eminence opposite Ticonderoga, and there the army, busy with its labor, received intelligence of the Declaration of Independence. It was read to them by Colonel St. Clair, on Sunday, the twenty-eighth of July; and when, with a loud voice, he cried—"God save the free, independent states of America!" three hearty cheers from the whole army burst forth in response. The fortification in progress was immediately called Fort Independence, and the eminence was named Mount Independence, which title it bears to this day.

Trumbull also advised the erection of a fortification on the loftier eminence opposite Ticonderoga, across the outlet of Lake George, but

* Matthew Ogden to Aaron Burr, July 26, 1776.

his opinion was unfortunately overruled. A year later, Burgoyne, as we shall observe, took possession of it, much to the detriment of the republicans, and it was called Mount Defiance.

The preparation and command of a flotilla to oppose the invaders, was intrusted to General Arnold. He applied all his skill, energy, and industry to the work. Ship-carpenters, sent from the eastern seaboard, were kept at work day and night at Skenesborough (now Whitehall), and the vessels, as fast as they were finished, were sent to be manned and equipped at Crown Point, where a Pennsylvania battalion, under Colonel Hartley, was posted. So promptly, energetically, and judiciously did Arnold carry forward his naval preparations, that before the end of August he sailed from his rendezvous, at Crown Point, with his little armament, consisting of one sloop, three schooners, and five gondolas, to take post, by order of General Gates, at the *Isle-aux-Têtes*, near the present Rouse's Point, at the foot of the lake.

Leaving the northern army in this improving state, and defensive position, we will turn again to the consideration of events at New York, where the belligerent forces were preparing for conflict.

CHAPTER XVIII.

APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL OFFICERS — PERPLEXING MOVEMENTS OF THE ENEMY — IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE FROM EUROPE — LORD DRUMMOND'S PEACE PROPOSITION — MOVEMENTS OF THAT GENTLEMAN — REJECTION OF HIS MISSION BY WASHINGTON — RUMORS OF PEACE CONTRADICTED — ATTEMPT BY CONGRESS TO BRIBE THE GERMAN TROOPS — CERTAINTY RESPECTING THE MOVEMENTS OF THE ENEMY — GENERAL LIVINGSTON'S VIGILANCE — DEALINGS WITH THE TORIES — WASHINGTON'S SYMPATHIES — REMOVAL OF THE INHABITANTS FROM NEW YORK — LANDING OF THE BRITISH ARMY ON LONG ISLAND — PREPARATIONS TO MEET THE FOE — CAUTION OF THE LATTER — SICKNESS OF GREENE — DISORDERS IN THE ARMY ON LONG ISLAND — PUTNAM IN COMMAND — AMERICAN DEFENCES — THE ENEMY'S FIRST ORDER OF MARCH — HOWE'S PROCLAMATION — WASHINGTON'S ANXIETY AND HIS FAITH — THE BATTLE BEGUN.

EARLY in August, Washington called the attention of Congress to the necessity for appointing more general officers in the army, and urged immediate action, with earnestness. He gave his reasons at considerable length, suggested their number, rank, and sphere of duty, and earnestly recommended that all should be created by promotions. Assuming that his recommendation would be complied with, he furnished the Congress with a list of all the colonels from New Hampshire to Pennsylvania inclusive, specifying those who ranked first in the several colonies. Accordingly, on the ninth of August, the Congress appointed Brigadier-Generals Heath, Spencer, Sullivan, and Greene, major-generals, and Colonels James Reed, Nixon, St. Clair, M'Dougall, Parsons, and James Clinton, brigadier-generals. Washington had persuaded Sullivan to remain in the service, and this promotion, with an explanation by Congress of the cause of his being superseded, healed his wounded spirit.

By the middle of August Washington was greatly perplexed with uncertainty concerning the rumored movements of the enemy.

Sometimes they would seem to indicate preparations for an immediate attack, and at others there was evident hesitation. Colonel Guy Johnson had arrived at Staten Island from England, on the seventh of August, in a vessel that conveyed intelligence of an important change in the French ministry, and increased prospects of a continental war, in which England must necessarily engage. He doubtless brought despatches from the British ministry that made the commanders not only exceedingly cautious in their movements, but anxious for reconciliation.

Much to the surprise of the Americans, a flag of truce approached from the British fleet, on the seventeenth of August, at the moment when it was believed that active preparations were being made for landing troops upon Long Island. It was borne by Lord Drummond, a gentleman well known in Maryland as a vain and officious person, who, several months before, had attempted to propose a plan of reconciliation. He had come to Philadelphia, at that time, from Halifax, through Boston and New York, and held interviews with several members of Congress. To Mr. Lynch he submitted a plan similar to Lord North's, which he asserted had been approved by the ministry; and he appeared anxious to become the instrument in effecting a reconciliation. He tried to get some member of Congress to go to England, to inform the cabinet of the real desires and intentions of the American representatives respecting the re-establishment of peace and harmony. He was regarded with some suspicions, yet a letter which he had written to General Robertson, at Boston, on the subject, was forwarded to Washington, at Cambridge, for the purpose of being sent into the city.

The sagacious Washington regarded the writer as a secret agent of the ministry, and immediately sent the letter to the president of Congress, with an expression of his suspicions. The Congress highly approved of his "care and attention in stopping Lord Drummond's letter."

Soon after this, his lordship's conduct in New York excited the suspicion, that he was holding secret intercourse with Governor Tryon and leading tories, and the committee of safety exacted

from him a parole of honor, that he would "hold no correspondence, directly or indirectly, with those who were in arms against the colonies, nor go into any port or harbor occupied by the enemy, nor on board any of their ships." He afterward obtained permission of the committee of safety to visit Bermuda, for the benefit of his health. When going out of the Narrows, he violated his parole by visiting Captain Vandeput, on board the *Asia*. And now, returning from the south, he again violated that parole, by coming into the harbor of New York which was studded with British ships-of-war, and holding direct intercourse with Lord Howe and other officers. He found the temper of Howe and the position of affairs, favorable to a renewal of efforts to bring about reconciliation, and drawing up a plan which was approved by the commissioners, Drummond, without appearing to realize that he had forfeited his word of honor, bore it himself, and sent it to Washington, with a letter asking permission to land at New York, for the purpose of proceeding to Philadelphia to lay the matter before the Congress.

Washington, still regarding Lord Drummond as an emissary of the British cabinet, and indignant because he had so flagrantly violated his parole, instantly refused the desired permission, in terms not very complimentary to his lordship. "I can allow much for your lordship's well-meant zeal on such an occasion," he said, "but I fear it has transported you beyond that attention to your parole, which belongs to the character of a man of strict honor. How your lordship can reconcile your past or present conduct with your engagement, so as to satisfy your own mind, I must submit to your own feelings; but I find myself under the disagreeable necessity of objecting to the mode of negotiation proposed, while your lordship's conduct appears so exceptionable."

Washington sent all the papers to the Congress. That body highly approved of the course he had taken; and the president said of Drummond: "Whether his designs were hostile or friendly, he equally merited the reproof you gave him."*

* The particulars of this affair may be found in Sparks's "Life and Writings of Washington," iii., 288 and 526, and iv., 51. The following summer, Drummond became acquainted with the

Thus ended Lord Drummond's peace mission. It effected nothing except the propagation of false rumors, detrimental to the republican cause, and, a day or two afterward, Washington found it necessary to allude to them thus, in general orders: "The general being informed, to his great surprise, that a report prevails, and is industriously spread far and wide, that Lord Howe has made propositions of peace, calculated by designing persons to lull us into a fatal security, his duty obliges him to declare, that no such offer has been made by Lord Howe, but on the contrary, from the best intelligence he can procure, the army may expect an attack as soon as the wind and tide shall prove favorable. He hopes, therefore, that every man's mind and arms will be prepared for action, and when called to it, show our enemies, and the whole world, that freemen contending on their own land, are superior to any mercenaries on earth."*

In the same vessel with Guy Johnson, came the Reverend Mr. Madison (afterward bishop of the diocese of Virginia), and a Mr. Johnston, from the same state. They landed at Staten Island, and by permission of Lord Howe, proceeded to New York, where they had an interview with Washington. Among other important matters, they informed him that many in England believed that the Congress would attempt to buy off the German troops, and that it might be effected without much difficulty. No doubt Washington communicated this hint to the Congress, for a few days afterward, that body passed the following resolution:—

"That these states will receive all such foreigners who shall leave the armies of his Britannic majesty in America, and shall choose to become members of any of these states, and they shall be protected in the free exercise of their respective religions, and be invested with the rights, privileges, and immunities of natives, as established

traitorous General Lee, while the latter was a prisoner in New York, and prevailed upon that officer to write to General Washington, to solicit a re-examination of his case, because he felt aggrieved at the charges of dishonor that had been made. Washington refused to have anything to do with the matter, assuring Lee that "no circumstances had since come to light which tended to alter his opinion."—Sparks's Washington, iii., 529.

* Orderly Book, August 20, 1776.

by the laws of these states; and, moreover, that this Congress will provide for every such person fifty acres of unappropriated lands, in some of these states, to be held by him and his heirs in absolute property." They also resolved to give to each foreign officer, who should leave the British army and choose to become a citizen of the United States, unappropriated lands in the proportion of their relative rank: and any officers who should bring with them some of these foreign soldiers, were offered, in addition, more lands, in proportion to the number they should bring over.* These resolutions were translated into German, printed, and during the autumn, as extensively circulated among the Hessians as possible.†

The uncertainty in the American camp respecting the intentions of the enemy, ended on the twenty-second of August, when intelligence was received that Lord Howe had landed a large body of troops at Gravesend bay, on the western coast of Long Island. The vigilant Brigadier-General William Livingston, from his camp at Elizabethtown, had seen movements upon Staten Island that attracted his earnest attention. At midnight he sent a spy there, who returned with the intelligence, that twenty thousand men had gone to Long Island to take possession there and secure the Hudson river, and that fifteen thousand remained to attack Bergen and Elizabethtown Points, and Amboy. These were exaggerations of important truths, and Livingston sent a messenger in all haste to

* Journal of Congress, August 14, 1776. To a colonel was to be given one thousand acres; to a lieutenant-colonel, eight hundred acres; to a major, six hundred acres; to a captain, four hundred acres; to a lieutenant, three hundred acres; to an ensign, two hundred acres; to every non-commissioned officer, one hundred acres.

† "For this business," say Graydon, "Christopher Ludwig, a baker of Philadelphia, was, among others, selected. As he was a German, and had been a soldier in his younger days, he was supposed to be peculiarly fitted for the purpose. Full of zeal for the cause, he was already at his post, and was bold enough to undertake the perilous employment; but whether he ventured himself in the enemy's camp, I never heard. I rather suspect he was shy, as he well knew the penalty of detection in such an enterprise. At any rate, the overtures had no effect: no deserters came over to us"—"Memoir," Harrisburg edition, page 141.

Doctor Franklin was one of a committee of Congress appointed to carry these resolutions into effect. In a letter to General Gates, quoted by Sparks ("Washington," iv., 67), he explains the method adopted to send them among the German troops on Staten Island. "Some of these," he said, "have tobacco marks on the back, that so tobacco being put up in them, in small quantities, as the tobacconists use, and suffered to fall into the hands of these people, they might divide the papers as plunder before their officers could come to the knowledge of the contents, and prevent their being read by the men." He sent some to Gates, to be distributed among the German troops in Canada, when they should approach.

lay the intelligence before Washington. It arrived at headquarters at dawn; and at sunrise there came over the bay the deep booming of cannon, and dense clouds of smoke ascended near the Narrows. It was evident that the invasion had commenced.

Washington had already, in the midst of his perplexity, made preparations in anticipation of such a movement. He had sent many more tories from New York to the care of Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut, at the same time expressing a humane desire that they should be treated kindly. At his suggestion, the New Jersey convention had taken measures to frustrate the designs of the loyalists in that state, who were congregating at Morristown, preparatory to giving aid to the enemy. He was informed that the inhabitants on the west end of Long Island intended to refuse resistance to the enemy should they attempt to land, and at his suggestion, the New York convention sent a committee there to disarm and seize all persons suspected of disaffection, and to lay waste the country, if necessary.* General Greene was directed to furnish continental troops to aid them, if called for; and Colonel Hand, with a corps of Pennsylvania riflemen, was stationed near the site of the present Fort Hamilton, not with any expectation of preventing the landing, but to serve as a check, and to give information.

When the storm seemed ready to burst over the devoted city, the commander-in-chief took many thoughtful precautions to soften the effects of its fury. He placed all public papers in a strong box, and sent them to the Congress by the hands of Lieutenant-Colonel Reed, brother of the adjutant-general; and at his suggestion, the wives of all the officers, who had been with them in camp, and many others, were removed beyond the reach of impending danger. Mrs. Washington yet remained in Philadelphia.† The mind of the commander-in-chief not being burdened with any anxiety for her

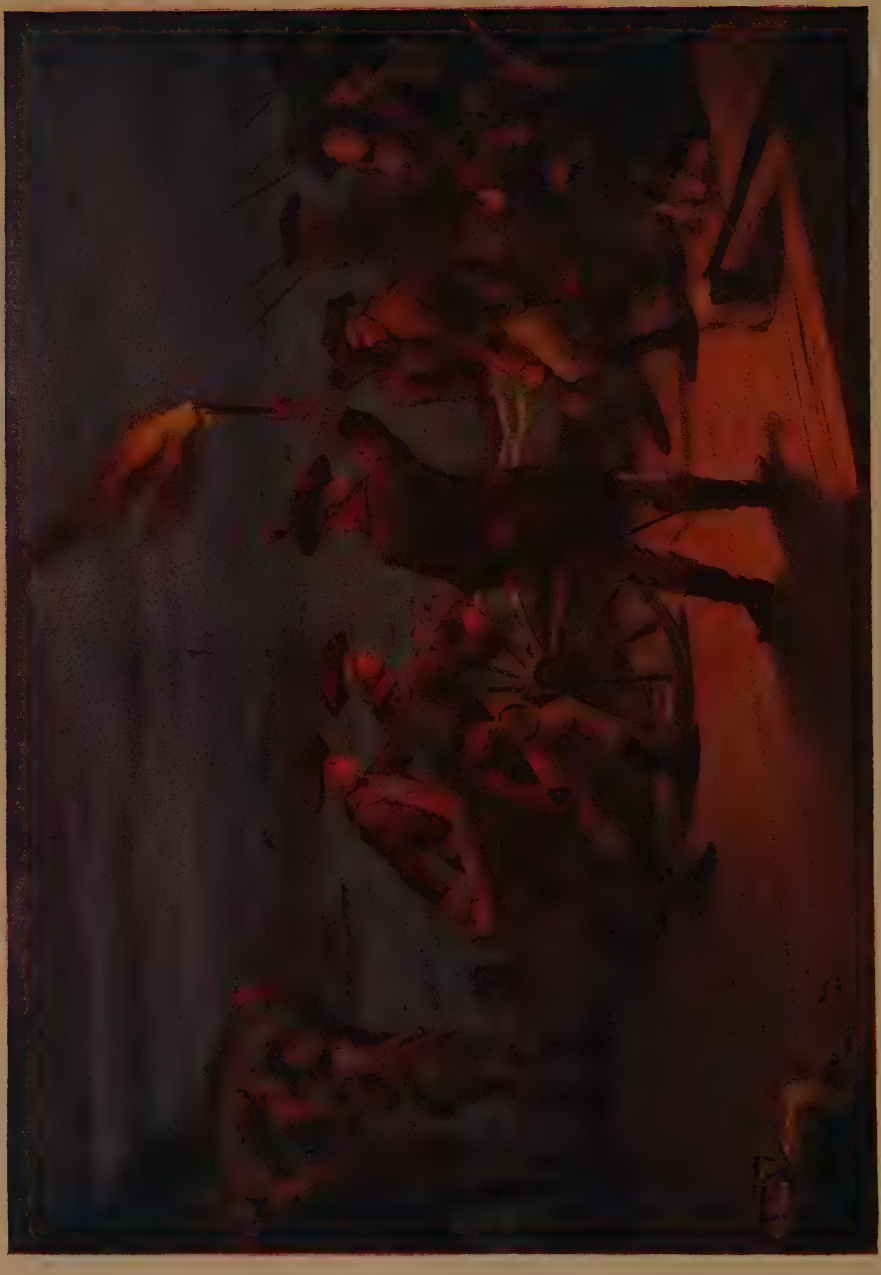
* Orders to arrest suspected persons in Queens county were issued, but every precaution was taken by Washington to prevent any act of injustice He wrote to the committee of Queens county, desiring them to inform the loyalists, that their property should be held sacred, and that only a temporary restraint of their persons was intended, as a precautionary measure.

† See a letter of Mrs. Washington to her sister at Eltham, written on the twentieth of August, published in the "Historical Magazine," for May, 1858.

safety, his sympathies for others flowed freely and warmly. He viewed the great numbers of women, children, and infirm persons in the city of New York, with the most sorrowful concern, for he felt that they must soon be in the midst of a bloody conflict. "When the men-of-war passed up the river," he said, in a letter to the New York convention, "the shrieks and cries of these poor creatures, running every way with their children, were truly distressing, and I fear they will have an unhappy effect upon the ears and minds of our young and inexperienced soldiery. Can no method be devised for their removal?" he asked. And then he urged the convention, not only to assist in their removal, but to afford provisions afterward for those, also, who were able to remove themselves. It would relieve him of a great anxiety, he said; and he offered to co-operate and assist to the utmost of his power. The convention nobly responded by action, and Washington, by proclamation, recommended the inhabitants to remove, at the same time requiring the officers and soldiers of his army to afford them aid.

The long-expected crisis had now arrived. On Thursday morning, the twenty-second of August, a large body of British troops, under General Howe, landed upon Long Island, near the Narrows. Four thousand men crossed the ferry in small boats and galleys, from Staten Island, where the quarantine ground now (1858) is, to the foot of the high bank on which Fort Hamilton stands, and landed under cover of the guns of the *Rainbow*, which lay at anchor in the middle of the channel. The riflemen under Colonel Hand,* posted on the hill above, immediately set fire to stacks of wheat and hay, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, and then retired beyond Flatbush, and took post behind a redoubt in the edge of a wood upon the central road, between that village

* Edward Hand was a native of Ireland, where he was born in December, 1744. He came to America in 1774, as surgeon's mate to the Royal Irish brigade, when he resigned his post, and entered upon the practice of the profession of medicine. He entered the army as colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment early in the year 1776, and served throughout the war, with faithfulness and honor, in the several capacities of colonel, adjutant-general, and brigadier-general. He was always in active service. General Hand died at Rockford, in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, on the third of September, 1802, at the age of fifty-eight years.



The Evacuation of Long Island

From the painting by E. Cameron

At New York, Washington awaited battle from the enemy. Much mystification as to the latter's movements caused him great perplexity. The uncertainty was dissipated by the arrival of Lord Howe in the Narrows on August 22, 1776, with a large force, which was landed on Long Island. Washington reinforced his troops at Brooklyn, and on the twenty-fifth General Putnam took chief command there. By reason of a nocturnal march of a part of the British force under Sir Henry Clinton the Americans were taken at a disadvantage, and at Bedford and Gowanus Bay suffered disaster; the remnants of the forces reached the camp at Brooklyn. Here, invested by a largely superior force, it was seen that a withdrawal to New York was but a prudent act. In the night of the twenty-ninth, almost silently, Washington withdrew his force of nine thousand men safely from the proximity of the enemy at Brooklyn.

and the Brooklyn lines. The burning wheat and hay caused the dense smoke that was seen from the city.

Soon after the first division had landed without opposition, British and Hessian troops poured over the sides of the English ships and transports, and in serried lines, a flotilla of small boat and galleys, under the direction of Commodore Hotham, bore five thousand more soldiers to the Long Island shore, in the bow of Gravesend bay, covered by the guns of the *Phœnix*, *Rose*, and *Greyhound*. With these landed Sir Henry Clinton, Earls Cornwallis and Percy, Generals Grant and Sir William Erskine, and Colonel, the Count Donop. Before noon, the whole force was landed. Three days afterward, General De Heister, the veteran chief-commander of the Hessians, landed near New Utrecht with two full German brigades, making the whole invading force upon Long Island, about fifteen thousand men,* well armed and equipped, and having forty heavy cannon. The reserve on Staten Island were left in command of Colonel Dalrymple.

At first it was supposed that the enemy would make an immediate and forced march toward Brooklyn, and Washington sent six regiments to reinforce the republicans there. In the city there was great alarm and confusion among the people; and in the camp and at the various outposts, there was vigilant activity, for it was rumored that vessels with troops had sailed eastward from the British fleet, with the suspected intention of circumnavigating Long Island, and coming through the sound and the East river, to land in the rear of the American army, and thus cut off its supplies from and retreat to the Westchester main.

Precisely when and where the enemy would strike his first blow, none could tell, and the night succeeding the landing near the Narrows, was one of great anxiety in New York. Early the next morning, the commander-in-chief, in general orders, made an earnest appeal to the troops at Brooklyn, believing it to be the last opportunity before a decisive battle would be fought.† But the ex-

* Lord Howe to the Admiralty, August 31, 1776.

† The following is from the general's Orderly-book, August twenty-third: "The enemy have now

tremely cautious foe, perceiving Colonel Hand and his riflemen ready for action, halted at Flatbush, and pitched their tents in that village for the night, instead of pressing forward to an attack upon the Americans, and, perhaps, achieving an easy victory.

That caution was of great service to the republicans, for their defensive works were yet quite incomplete. The skilful General Greene, under whose energetic directions they had been constructed, was then suffering utter prostration from a violent fever. Sullivan was placed in temporary command, but he was so ignorant of the field of operations before him, and so personally unknown to the troops that were commanded to obey him, that Washington, on visiting the Brooklyn lines on the twenty-fourth, perceived the expediency of putting a commander of more local knowledge and general influence in his place. Disorder everywhere prevailed. Detachments went out without orders to skirmish with the vanguard of the enemy, or to cut off sentinels and pickets in detail. Others wantonly burned houses without discriminating between friend and foe; and others meanly plundered the unfortunate inhabitants in their track. The commander-in-chief was displeased and alarmed by the aspect of affairs there, and on his return to the city, he appointed General Putnam to the chief command at Brooklyn, much to the joy of the brave old veteran, who had been made quite miserable by being kept in New York, when the post of danger was across the channel.

Putnam went over on the twenty-fifth, charged with minute

landed on Long Island, and the hour is fast approaching in which the honor and success of this army, and the safety of our bleeding country will depend. Remember, officers and soldiers, that you are freemen, fighting for the blessings of liberty; that slavery will be your portion, and that of your posterity, if you do not acquit yourselves like men. Remember how your courage and spirit have been despised and traduced by your cruel invaders; though they have found, by dear experience at Boston, Charleston, and other places, what a few brave men, contending in their own land, and in the best of causes, can do against hirelings and mercenaries. Be cool, but determined; do not fire at a distance, but wait for orders from your officers. It is the general's express orders, that if any man attempt to skulk, lie down, or retreat without orders, he be instantly shot down as an example. He hopes no such will be found in this army; but, on the contrary, that every one for himself resolving to conquer or die, and trusting in the smiles of Heaven upon so just a cause, will behave with bravery and resolution. Those who are distinguished for their gallantry and good conduct, may depend upon being honorably noticed and suitably rewarded; and if this army will but emulate and imitate their brave countrymen in other parts of America, he has no doubt they will by a glorious victory, save their country, and acquire to themselves immortal honor."

instructions from Washington, directing him, specially, to enjoin his officers to take strong measures for suppressing prevailing disorders. "Shameful it is," he said, "to find that those men who have come hither in defence of the rights of mankind, should turn invaders of them, by destroying the substance of their friends. .. The distinction between a well-regulated army and a mob, is the good order and discipline of the former, and the licentious and disorderly behavior of the latter."

Putnam had scarcely entered upon his new duties, when he was called to confront the enemy. To Sullivan was given the general command of all the troops outside the lines at Brooklyn, having for his assistant, Brigadier-General Lord Stirling. These lines were upon the higher ground within the limits of the denser portion of the present city, immediately opposite New York. The eminence was a peninsula formed by the Wallabout bay on the north, and Gowanus creek and bay on the south. Across the neck of this peninsula was a line of strong intrenchments and redoubts, extending from the highest point above the Wallabout to the swamp and creek that emptied into Gowanus bay. On Red Hook or point, southwestward of these lines, was a battery for their protection against the enemy's shipping; and for the defence of the town, a battery had been erected upon Governor's island, in the harbor, lying a short distance from Fort George.

In the rear of Brooklyn is a range of hills, extending from the Narrows toward Jamaica, in a northeasterly direction. They were then heavily wooded, and were cut through by four roads at different points, making an equal number of important passes to be guarded. These roads and passes, known respectively as the Jamaica and Bedford on the northward, Martense's lane on the southward, and Flatbush in the centre, had received the special attention of General Greene, who had made provision for their protection.* In the rear of these hills is a flat country, then, as

* For a minute discription of all the fortifications and other localities connected with the battle near Brooklyn, see Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," vol., ii., pages 598–608 inclusive, second edition.

now, traversed by several roads. These were reconnoitred by Colonel Miles and some Pennsylvanians, and Colonel Wyllys, of Connecticut, for the purpose of watching the movements of the enemy in that direction, and to report upon their progress. General Woodhull, who had long presided over the New York convention, was in command of the local militia, and was commissioned to deprive the invaders of provisions, by driving all the live stock to Hempstead.

The invading army, as we have observed, advanced toward Brooklyn soon after its debarkation. The English division, under the boastful General Grant,* composed the left wing, which rested on New York bay. The right wing, composed of choice battalions, under the command of Generals Clinton, and Earls Cornwallis and Percy, and accompanied by General Howe, took the road toward Flatlands, in the interior; and the centre, consisting of the Hessians, under General De Heister, advanced along the New Utrecht road. The plan was to have the shipping, and the troops under Grant and De Heister, divert the Americans by a feigned march toward and attack upon New York city, while the right wing should make a circuitous march by way of Flatlands, secure the roads and passes between that village and Jamaica, and gain the American left, if possible. And to keep the inhabitants quiet and secure their co-operation, General Howe sent among them a proclamation, giving permission to those who had "been compelled by the leaders in the rebellion, to take up arms against his majesty's government," to return to their homes, under a guaranty of protection, and offering encouragement and reward to those who should take up arms for the king.

Washington's vigilant eye had seen the striking of tents upon Staten Island, from time to time; and through his telescope, the

* Lord Stirling, who was now in the field to confront General Grant in battle, was in the British house of commons in February, 1775, when he heard that officer (then a member of the house), in boastful words declare, that he "had served in America — knew the Americans very well — was certain they would not fight — they never would dare to face an English army — did not possess any of the qualifications necessary to make a good soldier;" and concluded with the assertion, that he would "undertake to march from one end of the continent to the other, with five thousand men.' This foolish boast was repeated by General Gage at Boston.

embarkation of De Heister's Hessians for the Gravesend beach, was revealed to him. As the invading force was thus augmented, he sent over additional reinforcements to the republican army on the heights of Brooklyn, and every weak point was strengthened.

Although receiving intelligence hourly from Putnam's camp, Washington could not rest satisfied with mere reports, and on the twenty-sixth he again visited the lines, accompanied by his adjutant-general. All that day he was occupied in visiting the redoubts and guard-posts, and reconnoitring the enemy, until he made himself well acquainted with the relative position of the belligerent forces. He observed, also, toward evening, what gave him great anxiety. There were extensive movements among the battalions of the enemy, that betokened some immediate and important action. De Heister advanced to Flatbush, and General Clinton, with the right wing of the army, withdrew to Flatlands, preparatory, as we shall presently observe, for a nocturnal march that proved direful to the republicans.

These movements were interpreted by Washington as the precursors of an immediate conflict, and he returned to New York at evening, full of anxious meditations, for he was not aware that an attack upon the city with the shipping, was not in the programme of the enemy's operations.* Although the choicest troops, with brave and excellent commanders, were on Long Island, yet the finest equipped of them all, the southern brigades, as those from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland were called, had never engaged in battle; and the anxious inquiries were momentarily pressing themselves upon the judgment of the commander-in-chief, "How will they endure the encounter? How shall we defend the

* In his official letter to the admiralty, dated on board the *Eagle*, August 31st, 1776, Lord Howe clearly shows that it was no part of the plan of the enemy to attempt to land any troops at New York. He was only to make diversion with his ships, to deceive the Americans. Accordingly on the night of the twenty-seventh of August, just before the forward movement on land had commenced, he ordered Sir Peter Parker to proceed higher up the channel toward New York, with five armed vessels, to be employed as occasion might require, in aid of the British on the shore. Owing to an unfavorable wind, this movement could not be made, and only the *Roebuck*, the leader of the detached squadron, could proceed high enough to exchange a few random shots with the American battery on Red Hook, during the engagement that ensued.

city? How and whither shall we fly, if disaster shall make a retreat necessary?"

These were solemn and momentous questions. There had been slight and partial skirmishing with the enemy's advanced guard, but not sufficient to judge how the raw recruits would act when a battle should really begin. But Washington, though exceedingly anxious, did not allow himself to brood gloomily over the coming events, or for a moment fear that He who doeth all things well, would allow a cause so righteous to be utterly ruined. On the contrary, he was made glad by the suggestions of hope sustained by faith; and after supping cheerfully with his military family, and preparing, at an early hour, to withdraw to his chamber, he said: "The same Providence that rules to-day will rule to-morrow, gentlemen. Good night." He soon fell into a peaceful slumber, from which he was aroused at dawn, to hear the deep thunder of distant cannon, and to receive intelligence that the invaders were in motion and the battle had begun.

CHAPTER XIX.

CLINTON'S NOCTURNAL MARCH — IMPORTANT PASSES SECURED BY THE ENEMY — ADVANCE OF THE BRITISH LEFT WING — STIRLING SENT TO OPPOSE GRANT — SKIRMISHING AT THE GREENWOOD HILLS — POSITIONS OF THE BELLIGERENTS — THE HESSIANS AT FLATBUSH — CLINTON'S ATTACK ON THE AMERICAN LEFT — SULLIVAN'S RETREAT — BLOODY ENCOUNTERS — AMERICANS DEFEATED — WASHINGTON AT BROOKLYN — HIS ANXIETY AND IMPOTENCE — STIRLING'S PERIL — ATTACK ON CORNWALLIS — FLIGHT OF AMERICANS ACROSS GOWANUS CREEK — STIRLING DEFEATED — END OF THE BATTLE — CAUSES OF THE DISASTERS — PERILOUS SITUATION OF THE AMERICANS — THE BRITISH COMMENCE A SEIGE — WITHDRAWAL OF THE REPUBLICANS FROM THEIR LINES — MARVELLOUS ESCAPE TO NEW YORK.

We have alluded to a nocturnal march made by Sir Henry Clinton. It was commenced at nine o'clock in the evening of the twenty-sixth of August, when he left Flatlands with his vanguard of light infantry, followed by Lord Percy, with grenadiers, artillery and light dragoons, and Lord Cornwallis, who brought up the rear-guard with the heavy ordnance. With the latter was General Howe and his staff.

Clinton was guided by a resident tory, through fields and by-paths, in a silent march — so silent that scarcely a footfall of all his host could be heard at the distance of ten rods. No beat of drum, no word of command, no whisper of conversation, broke the solemn stillness of that cool, hazy night. Softly they crossed a morass by a narrow causeway, with just breadth enough to bear up the heavy cannon wheels, and at two o'clock in the morning, they had gained the high wooded hills near the present village of East New York, unobserved by Colonels Miles and Wyllys, and their patrols, except some subalterns on horseback, whom they captured. From these they learned that the Bedford road, and the whole highway to Jamaica, were unoccupied and unguarded, and that no troops were

stationed at either of the passes upon these roads. This was unexpected good luck for Clinton, and he immediately detached light infantry to secure both. At dawn these important posts were in his possession, and before the Americans were aware that the enemy had left Flatlands, he was in their rear, occupying the heights overlooking Bedford, and ready to attack the Americans at their weakest point. The advantage thus gained by Clinton, was fatal to the hopes of the republicans.

While the British right wing was gaining this vantage ground, the left, under General Grant, was in motion. It consisted of two brigades and a regiment of regulars, a battalion of New York loyalists raised by Governor Tryon, and ten heavy field-pieces. At midnight they commenced a march toward Brooklyn, along the coast road. The militia guard at Martense's lane, commanded by Major Byrd, gave the alarm at headquarters, and at three o'clock in the morning, General Putnam detached Lord Stirling with Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland regiments, commanded by Colonels At Lee, Haslet, and Smallwood, to oppose Grant. At the same time Sullivan was ordered to hasten with a detachment to the heights overlooking Flatbush, on the middle road, where only Hand's riflemen were posted, supported by the troops of Miles and Wyllys, near by upon the Bedford road.

Stirling's detachment consisted of about fifteen hundred men. They rallied with alacrity, and eagerly pushed forward. They had passed Gowanus creek and reached the timbered hills wherein repose the dead of Greenwood, just as day began to dawn, and there they met the militia guard that had been driven from the lower pass. They had been rallied by Brigadier-General Parsons, and had bravely maintained a conflict for some time, with the enemy's van.

At this moment the front ranks of the British began to appear in the dim twilight of early morning. Stirling hastily formed his troops, and made a short speech to them. After telling them of the insulting language of General Grant in Parliament,* he said:

* See note on page 266, vol. ii.

"He may have his five thousand men with him now—we are not so many—but I think we are enough to prevent his advancing further on his march over the continent, than that mill-pond," pointing to the head of Gowanus bay. This little speech had a powerful effect upon those high-spirited troops; and in the action that followed, they showed that the insult was keenly felt, and severely resented.

Colonel At Lee's Pennsylvanians were placed in ambush, in an orchard on the south side of the road, to attack the advancing enemy, while the regiments of Haslet and Smallwood were formed upon the hills near by. This movement was just completed, when the van of the British came up. At Lee gave them two or three rounds with spirit, and then fell back to the woods on the left of Stirling. At this moment, Colonel Kiechlein and his riflemen, Colonel De Haas and his battalion, and Captain Carpenter with two field-pieces, arrived. A part of Kiechlein's corps were at once posted along a hedge at the foot of the hill, and part in front of the wood; and Grant sent forward a detachment of light troops, who took post in the orchard just left by At Lee, and behind some hedges. It was now broad daylight. The sky was lowery, and a fresh breeze, unfavorable for the intended advance of the British shipping, came from the northeast. Slight skirmishing commenced at once, and for two or three hours there was a continued rattle of musketry, and an occasional discharge of cannon. The *Roebuck* beat up against the wind and tide, opened upon the battery on Red Hook, and received some telling shots in return.

Grant formed his brigades upon eminences opposite Lord Stirling's position, six hundred yards distant, but neither party desired an immediate battle. Stirling's chief object was to defend the pass and keep the enemy in check, while Grant was instructed not to press an attack until informed by signal-guns from the right wing, that Sir Henry Clinton had accomplished his object.

While Stirling and Grant were thus confronted, De Heister opened a cannonade from his camp at Flatbush, upon the redoubt on the hill near by, where Hand and his riflemen were stationed.

This was just at daybreak, and Sullivan hastened toward the redoubt to reconnoitre. He then took command of the riflemen, only four hundred in number, and prepared to defend the Flatbush pass. All this time he was unsuspicious of the fatal movement of Clinton, although he had foretold that the enemy would come through the Bedford pass.*

De Heister did not advance, but thundered away at the redoubt to keep the attention of the Americans in that direction, until late in the morning, when the voices of heavy cannon from the northward informed him that Clinton had secured his coveted vantage ground, and was coming down upon the Americans. He then ordered Count Donop to advance with his Hessian regiment and storm the redoubt, while he followed with the entire remainder of his division.

When the redoubt was reached there was no one there to defend it, for Sullivan, on hearing Clinton's cannon, at once perceived the imminent peril of his little army. He knew that his flank was already turned, and that safety consisted only in flight. He immediately ordered a retreat to the lines at Brooklyn; and down the rough and densely-wooded slopes he led the imperilled troops, with all possible speed. But it was too late. They were met on the open plain of Bedford by Clinton's light infantry and dragoons, and driven back to the woods, where Hessian bayonets awaited them. There was De Heister, with his grim legion thirsting for blood. A terrible strife ensued, in which the troops of Miles and Wyllys, commanded only by their respective colonels, were involved. The ensnared republicans, broken into small detachments, fought desperately, hand to hand, while driven backward and forward between the full ranks of the British and Hessians. Many were slain, some took refuge in the solitary places of the hills, others broke through the gleaming wall of bayonets and sabres, and escaped to the American lines, while a large number, including General Sullivan and several subordinate officers, were made prisoners. Those who escaped were followed to the verge of the

* Sullivan's Letter to the President of Congress, October 25, 1777. Sparks, iv., 517

American lines by grenadiers, who were with difficulty restrained from storming Fort Putnam, as the principal redoubt at Brooklyn was called.

It was just at dawn, as we have observed, when Washington was apprized of the opening battle. The rattle of musketry when Grant fell upon the picket at the lower pass, had been heard by the sentinels and wakeful citizens in New York, and before sunrise the wildest alarm seized the inhabitants. The ships in menacing motion were plainly seen, and an immediate attack upon the city, by land and water, was anticipated. Washington was in the saddle at daybreak, and soon all the troops were at their alarm-posts. But as the morning wore away and no vessel but the inferior *Roebuck* advanced, the panic subsided, and the commander-in-chief, satisfied that the city would not be soon attacked, hastened to the lines at Brooklyn, where he arrived in time to be a witness of the rout and slaughter of his troops, without power to aid or relieve them for the lines were feebly manned.

With the most intense anxiety and anguish of spirit, Washington now saw a heavy column of the enemy emerging from the woods on his left wherein the disasters to Sullivan's command had just occurred, and descending the hills in the direction of Stirling's division, which consisted of the choicest troops of the republican army. From the eminence on which Fort Putnam stood, he could perceive, with his telescope, the jeopardy of his gallant friends, but could do nothing to avert the danger.

Stirling was not aware of his peril. For a long time he had been waiting for Grant to advance, totally unconscious of the cause of his forbearance. But when the column of the enemy which gave the commander-in-chief such anxiety, approached Gowanus bay, and Cornwallis, its leader, fired two cannon as a signal for Grant to commence the attack in earnest, the terrible truth flashed upon his lordship's mind, that the enemy was in force between his division and the Brooklyn lines. With this revealment came intelligence of the woful disasters on the left.

It was now almost eleven o'clock. General Grant immediately

obeyed the signals and pressed forward. Colonel At Lee and many of his corps were made prisoners, after a series of spirited skirmishes, in which that brave commander exhibited the utmost courage, skill, and fortitude.* Hemmed in by a superior force, Stirling saw no chance for escape from captivity, except across the Gowanus creek, upon a bridge and milldam, and at places where it might be forded at low water. To do this, he found it necessary to attack Cornwallis, who was posted near another mill a little above; and while a few—a forlorn hope—should keep the earl and his grenadiers at bay, a large part of the Americans might escape. Changing his front, and leaving his main body in conflict with Grant, Stirling, at the head of a part of Smallwood's battalion commanded by Major Gist, fell upon Cornwallis. For twenty minutes the fight was terrible. "Good God!" exclaimed Washington in agony, as he beheld the conflict from Fort Putnam, then menaced by Clinton's victorious troops, "what brave fellows I must this day lose!"

For a time victory hovered over the combatants, doubtful upon whom to bestow the palm. At last Cornwallis yielded, and was about to retreat up the Port road toward Flatbush, when a large reinforcement arrived and turned the fortunes of the day against the Americans. Meanwhile, a large portion of the remains of Stirling's command that had been left to withstand Grant, driven before the enemy, escaped across Gowanus Creek, by wading and swimming, and reached the lines in safety, but in sad plight, being

* Colonel Samuel J. At Lee was quite a young man at this time, being only thirty-eight years of age. He had commanded a company in the French and Indian war, and when the struggle for independence commenced, he was appointed to the command of a Pennsylvania regiment. His conduct in the battle on Long Island was meritorious in the highest degree, and his loss at this time was greatly deplored. The account of the battle, so far as he was concerned, given by Colonel At Lee in his journal (extracts from which are published in the "American Archives," fifth series, i., 1251), is a soldier's plain narrative, and exhibits a most thrilling picture of a brave soldier's experience in battle. He maintained the conflict with the greatest bravery and fortitude, until his corps was dispersed or cut to pieces, and then, with twenty-two of his companions, he surrendered to a party of Highlanders. It was a long time before he was exchanged. He afterward acted as an Indian commissioner, and was elected to Congress in 1780, where he took a very prominent position on account of his talent and activity. He was on the committee appointed in consequence of the mutiny of the Pennsylvania troops at the opening of 1781. Colonel At Lee's place of usual residence was at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, but he died at Philadelphia, on the twenty-fifth of November, 1786, aged forty-eight years.

Crossing the Delaware

From the painting by Frank T. Merrill

On Christmas night, 1776, Washington marched his small army to M'Conkey's Ferry, the present Taylorville, where he arrived near sunset. The Delaware was choked with ice; a high wind and a powerful current added to the toil and risk, but the commander was not to be deterred in his plan to attack the British at Trenton. The passage of the river was a perilous undertaking, amid sleet and snow and in inky darkness. The general embarked with his staff near midnight, and on the Jersey side he watched with intense anxiety the hazardous landing of his forces, which was finally effected by three o'clock. Within an hour the patriot army was formed and on the nine-mile march to surprise the enemy, if possible, before daylight at Trenton. Little wonder that Washington's aspect was "pensive and solemn," in this hour, heavy with the fate of national liberty.

drenched with water, and covered with mud. But they carried with them the tattered standard of Smallwood's regiment, and over twenty prisoners.

The troops of Cornwallis rallied when they saw the approaching reinforcements, and for ten minutes, five companies of Smallwood's corps fought greatly superior numbers, with desperation. Stirling was endeavoring to get between the enemy and Fort Box, on the opposite side of the creek, so as to escape under cover of its guns, but his ranks were overpowered and broken. Falling back to a grove, they rallied and made another attack, when they were again overpowered. They were driven out into a cornfield, where some were bayoneted, others were made prisoners, and a few joined their companions in their flight across the Gowanus morass. More than two hundred and fifty of these brave Americans, most of them of Smallwood's regiment, the flower of the army, perished in the fight, while the commander-in-chief, and their companions in arms within the lines, looked on in anguish, powerless to save.

Deprived of nearly all his brave men, the intrepid Stirling was compelled to yield. He fled over the hills, closely pursued, and finding escape impossible, he surrendered himself to De Heister, and was immediately sent on board the *Eagle*, Lord Howe's flag-ship, where he found Sullivan and other prisoners-of-war. Thus ended the battle, when the sun was at meridian; when it descended behind the hills of New Jersey, one third of the five thousand patriots, who on that day had contended for victory, were lost to their country — dead, wounded, or prisoners.

The victorous troops, made hot and sanguinary by the fatigues and triumphs of the morning, rushed toward the rebel lines, eager to carry them by storm. Behind these were three thousand determined men, and the enemy were met by a severe cannonade and volleys of musketry, that checked them for a moment; but it was with great difficulty that Howe, who had accompanied Clinton, and was now among the concentrated battalions, restrained them. His artillery was not up, he had no fascines to fill the ditches, no axes for cutting the *abatis*, and no scaling ladders by which to

reach the parapets.* He was also ignorant of the real strength of the Americans, knew how desperately they would fight, and counting upon his superior numbers and equipments, felt certain of final victory. Preferring to win the remainder of the conquest, not so uddenly but with less bloodshed, he called back his troops to a secure place in front of the American lines, beyond musket-shot distance, and encamped for the night. Both parties were willing to rest.

Sullivan and Stirling being prisoners, no reliable report of the American loss was made to the commander-in-chief, and the precise number was never known. General Howe, in his despatch to the colonial secretary a few days afterward, estimated it at thirty-three hundred, and stated his own loss in killed, wounded, and made prisoners, at three hundred and sixty-seven. The loss of the Americans did not exceed, probably, sixteen hundred and fifty, of whom eleven hundred were prisoners.

The disasters that befell the republicans on that eventful day became a subject for much earnest discussion, and the student of our history has found it difficult to determine to what particular cause to ascribe them, other than the ordinary and sometimes unaccountable fortunes of war. Looking back from our stand-point, and carefully viewing the immediate antecedents of those disasters, a variety of circumstances appear clearly chargeable with the misfortunes. The chief of these are, want of knowledge respecting the intended movements of the enemy, want of proper vigilance, and a divided command. Washington could not determine whether the enemy intended to strike Long Island or New York first, or both; and to meet the exigency, he was compelled, not only to have his army separated by a wide strait, but scattered over a large area. The illness of General Greene, who was thoroughly acquainted with the whole field of operations around Brooklyn, caused the important command there to fall into the hands of a much inferior officer, for Putnam, though brave, lacked many of the elements of a great commander. He remained within the lines all day, and

* Captain Montressor before a parliamentary committee, in 1779.

the command outside was divided; a condition for an army always to be deplored, for confusion and disaster is sure to follow.

But the most fatal error of all seems to have been the inattention to the hill-passes on the left. Washington had specially instructed Putnam to see that these were all "secured by *abatis*, where necessary, to make the enemy's approach as difficult as possible." But nothing of the sort was done, and the very passes through which the enemy (known to have landed on the island and advanced into the interior) might gain the rear of the American army, were wholly unguarded, notwithstanding Sullivan had urged attention to them, and had paid horsemen for patrolling by night, during the time of his temporary command. Had a troop of light-horse been employed in that direction, Sir Henry might have been thwarted; and it has been justly remarked—"The Connecticut horsemen, therefore, ridiculed by the southerners for their homely equipments, sneered at as useless, and dismissed for standing on their dignity and privileges as troopers, might, if retained, have saved the army from being surprised and severed, its advanced guards routed, and those very southern troops cut up, captured, and almost annihilated."*

The night of the twenty-seventh was one of great anxiety to the commander-in-chief. His fatigued, sick, wounded, and dispirited troops were without sufficient shelter, while a heavy storm appeared to be gathering, and before him lay a victorious enemy, evidently preparing for a deadly conflict. All night he was engaged in efforts to strengthen his position. Troops were ordered over from New York, and a courier was sent to call down Mifflin with the regiments of Magaw, Shee, and Glover, at Fort Washington and Kingsbridge.†

* Irving's Life of Washington, ii., 327.

† General Woodhull, as we have observed, was employed with the local militia in driving the live stock from the western part of Long Island to Hempstead plains, and he did not participate in the battle on the twenty-seventh of August. His headquarters were at Jamaica, and his force small. He discovered the position of Clinton at the Jamaica pass on the morning of the twenty seventh, but it was too late for him to receive reinforcements and he was compelled to listen to the roar of battle for hours afterward, without the privilege of engaging in it. On hearing of the disasters to his friends, he ordered his troops to fall back two miles beyond Jamaica, while he awaited orders; and the next day, while taking refuge from the storm in a tavern, he was made a prisoner

The morning dawned drearily. Heavy masses of vapor rolled in from the sea; and at four o'clock, when Washington visited every part of the works, and gave words of encouragement to the suffering soldiers, a mist was falling. As the light increased, the strength of the gathering foe was revealed. More than fifteen thousand well-armed soldiers hovered around the American camp. There was gloom everywhere—in the sky, on the land, on the water, and over the spirits of the republicans. They almost despaired, for the heavy rains had injured their arms and destroyed their ammunition; but when, at five o'clock, Mifflin crossed the East river with the choice regiments of Magaw and Shee, and Glover's battalion of Marblehead fishermen and sailors, in all more than a thousand strong, all fresh and cheerful, there was an outburst of joy, for they seemed like sunshine, as they passed the lines of sufferers and took post on the extreme left, near the Wallabout.

At ten o'clock the British opened a cannonade upon the American works, and throughout the day there were frequent skirmishes. Rain fell copiously all the afternoon, and the main body of the British kept within their tents, but when the storm abated toward evening, they broke ground within five hundred yards of the American works, and commenced regular approaches by trenches The night was chilly, and the republicans, without tents or barracks, were drenched with rain, and suffered dreadfully. At midnight a dense fog fell upon the hostile camps and nearly all the next day it hung motionless, concealing everything within its mysterous bosom.

In the afternoon, while General Mifflin, accompanied by Adjutant-General Reed and Colonel Grayson, one of Washington's aids-du-

by a party of British, under Sir James Baird. He was ordered to cry "God save the king!" and because he said "God save us all!" instead, Sir James brutally struck him with his sword, and wounded him in the arm and head severely. He was taken to Jamaica, then to the British camp at Brooklyn, and from there conveyed on board a loathsome transport in Gravesend bay. A humane officer procured his removal to a house in New Utrecht, where his wounded arm was amputated at the elbow. It was unskilfully done, and mortification and death ensued. General Woodhull was a patriot of truest stamp. He had served his country in the French and Indian war, under Abercrombie and Amherst. He also served in the colonial assembly and the provincial Congress of New York, and presided over the latter body. He was in the fifty-fourth year of his age at the time of his death.

camp, were reconnoitring near Red Hook, a light breeze arose and gently lifted the fog from Staten Island. There they beheld the enemy's fleet lying within the Narrows, and boats passing rapidly from the admiral's vessel to the other ships. It was evident that preparations were making for a movement toward the city, and with this conviction, the three officers hastened back to the camp, resolved to advise Washington to withdraw his army to New York. It was already known that some of the fleet had sailed around Long Island, and were anchored in Flushing bay. Troops landed from these might take possession of Harlem river, and secure the key to Manhattan island at Kingsbridge, and with other ships, passing up Hudson's and the East river, would imprison the army in New York, and separate it from the one at Brooklyn. Thus the Americans would be completely surrounded and divided.

Washington at once comprehended the gathering perils, and called a council of war at five o'clock that evening.* The deliberations of the council were brief for their opinions were concurrent, and it was unanimously resolved to evacuate Long Island and retreat to New York that very night.

To effect this, with nine thousand men, their arms and munitions of war, in the face of an enemy so near that the sound of their pickaxes were heard in their trenches, required great skill, secrecy, and circumspection. They were to be marched some distance to the shore, and then conveyed across a river three quarters of a mile wide, disturbed by very strong tidal currents.

Washington's first movement was to order Colonel Glover and his regiment of sea-farers, to collect and man all boats of every kind that could be found, and have them in readiness by midnight; and General M'Dougal was appointed to superintend the embarkation. And to put the army in marching condition without revealing the true cause, orders were issued to all officers to hold their troops in readiness to attack the enemy that night. This order created general surprise, but all obeyed, and before eight o'clock

* The council consisted of his excellency, General Washington; Major-Generals Putnam and Spencer; Brigadier-Generals Mifflin, M'Dougall, Parsons, Scott, Wadsworth and Fellows.

the whole army was prepared for a general movement. To deceive the enemy, Mifflin was to remain at the lines with a covering party, composed of Hand's riflemen and the remains of the Delaware and Maryland regiments, while the main body should march in detachments to the shore and embark. This effected, the covering party were to march quickly to the ferry and embark likewise.

Late in the evening of the twenty-ninth, the well-arranged movement began. It was conducted so orderly and silently, that no suspicious sound fell upon the ears of the drowsy British sentinels. The night was intensely dark, and the fog still lay heavily upon the land and water, the city and the camp. At a little past midnight, while the movement was going on almost noiselessly, and many had crossed the channel, the deep roar of a cannon, like a sudden thunderpeal, startled them. "The effect," says an American officer, "was at once alarming and sublime,"* and no one could tell whether it was within the republican or royalist lines. But the shock was temporary, the deepest silence ensued, and the retreat went on.

Washington, who had stationed himself at the ferry at the beginning, was watching every movement with the greatest anxiety. The night was wearing away, the tide was changing, a strong northeast wind was rising, and yet a large proportion of the troops had not embarked. He sent his aid-de-camp, Colonel Scammel, to hasten the steps of those on the march. Scammel communicated the order, by mistake, to General Mifflin, and to the amazement of Washington, the whole covering party, under that officer, came hurrying toward the ferry, while a large body were waiting to embark, the boats being insufficient. The confusion was great and alarming. "It's a dreadful mistake," said Washington to Mifflin, after some warm words had passed between them, and he found that it was Scammel's blunder. "Unless the troops can resume their posts before their sence is discovered by the enemy," he said, "the most disastrous consequences are to be apprehended."†

* Graydon's Memoir, page 147.

† Colonel Hand's narrative, quoted in the "Life and Correspondence of President Reed," i., 228. Colonel Hand says, that when Mifflin came up, the commander-in-chief said: "'Good God!

Mifflin and his troops returned to the lines immediately, and remained there some hours longer.

Meanwhile, a revengeful woman living near the ferry, whose husband, suspected of toryism, had been sent into the interior of New Jersey, endeavored to inform the British commander of the retreat. She sent her negro servant with the information, who first came upon a Hessian outpost. The Germans could not understand his language, and believing him to be a spy, they kept him till morning, and delivered him to a British officer who was making a round of inspection at daylight. His story astonished General Howe, and Captain Montressor was immediately sent to reconnoitre the American works. The negro's tale was true. They were deserted. Detachments were sent in pursuit toward the ferry, but it was too late.*

It was now six o'clock in the morning, and of all that army of nine thousand men that had lain within the lines at Brooklyn the night before, only a single boat-load — a load of miscreants who lingered to plunder — remained within musket-shot of the Long Island shore. Arms, ammunition, provisions, baggage, horses, carts, sick, wounded, all and everything except some heavy ordnance that could not be dragged to the ferry through the deep mud, had crossed the swift-flowing tide. For six long hours the fishermen-soldiers of Marblehead and Salem had nobly plied their muffled oars, and achieved a glorious result in the salvation of an army.

Washington, deaf to entreaties, had remained on the Long Island side until the last company had embarked; and when the fog that had concealed them was lifted by a gentle breeze, and rolled away, and the sunlight burst upon Brooklyn and New York, the motley host of continentals and militia were marching joyfully toward the hills of Rutger's farm, on Manhattan island, then far beyond the

General Mifflin, I am afraid you have ruined us by so unseasonably withdrawing the troops from the lines.' Mifflin replied with some warmth — 'I did it by your order.' His excellency declared it could not be. General Mifflin swore 'By God I did;' and asked — 'Did Scammell act as an aid-de-camp for the day or not?' His excellency acknowledged he did. 'Then,' said Mifflin, 'I had orders through him.'" Then followed the remark of Washington just quoted.

* Onderdonk's Revolutionary Reminiscences of Long Island, ii., 131.

city limits. The commander-in-chief immediately sought repose, for he had hardly been off his horse, and had never closed his eyes for forty-eight hours preceding."*

That retreat, in all its circumstances, was truly wonderful. Surely that fog was the shield of God's providence over those men engaged in a holy cause. If "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" in the time of Deborah, these mists were the wings of the cherubim of Mercy and Hope over the Americans on that occasion.†

* Washington said to the president of Congress, on the thirty-first of August: "Since Monday, scarce any of us have been out of the lines till our passage across the East river was effected yesterday morning; and for forty-eight hours preceding that, I had hardly been off my horse, and never closed my eyes." In Knight's "Pictorial History of the Reign of George III.," i., 273, the writers, with their usual unfairness and mendacity when speaking of the Americans and their friends in England, say that "Washington kept his own person on the New York side of the water." This is asserted in the face of ample evidence, even of English officers, to the contrary.

† Since the preparation of this chapter I have been favored with the perusal of several manuscript letters, written by the Rev. Dr. John Woodhull, of Leacock, Pennsylvania, to his wife, during August and September, 1776. In a letter dated the second of September, at the camp at Bergen, he writes that, for almost a week previous to the battle on the twenty-seventh, the wind "had been contrary" for the British fleet, and prevented their coming up the bay. This prevalence of a northerly wind at New York, for so long a time in August, is unprecedented. In the same letter he says, after speaking of the retreat. "A great fog favored us, the *only* fog that has been here for a long time." He also mentions, in a previous letter, the fact that Lord Dunmore's fleet was not allowed to join that under Howe, for fear of infecting the latter with a prevalent disease. Before leaving the Virginia coast, the small-pox had made sad havoc among the white people and negroes that composed Dunmore's marauding force.

The writer of these letters, then a chaplain in the Leacock battalion, many of whom were members of his congregation, was afterward the revered pastor of the old church at Freehold, New Jersey, wherein William Tennent had preached. He was also chaplain at Valley Forge, to which place he repaired with every male member of his congregation; for in those days politics were preached in the pulpits, and men were led to action on the side of freedom by faithful pastors. The eminent General Muhlenberg was one of this stamp. When the war for independence was kindling, he was a clergyman in Virginia, and at the close of 1775, he concluded a sermon with the words of Scripture: "There is a time for all thing — a time to preach and a time to pray;" but those times, he said, had passed away; and then, in a voice that sounded like a trumpet-blast through the church, he exclaimed: "There is a time to *fight*, and that time has now come!" Then laying aside his sacerdotal gown, he stood before his flock in the full uniform of a Virginia colonel. He ordered the drums to be beaten at the church door for recruits; and almost the entire male audience, capable of bearing arms, joined his standard. Nearly three hundred men enlisted under his banner on that day.

Woodhull was Tennent's successor, and served the congregation faithfully forty-five years. He was a preacher of the gospel fifty-six years, and died at Freehold, in November, 1824, at the age of eighty years. A picture of the old Freehold church, and also of Doctor Woodhull's monument, may be found in Lossing's "Field-Book of the Revolution."

CHAPTER XX

GLOOMY PICTURE OF THE ARMY — WASHINGTON'S APPREHENSIONS — MOVEMENTS OF THE BRITISH — AN "INFERNAL MACHINE" — DESERTIONS OF THE MILITIA — WASHINGTON'S FORBEARANCE — OBVIOUS INTENTIONS OF THE ENEMY — CONTEMPLATED DESTRUCTION OF NEW YORK — COUNCIL-OF-WAR AND ITS RESULTS — WASHINGTON'S SYSTEM OF WARFARE — PROPOSAL ON THE SUBJECT OF PEACE — ACTION OF CONGRESS — CONFERENCE ON STATEN ISLAND — ITS RESULTS — FRANKLIN AND LORD HOWE — EFFECTS OF THE CONFERENCE.

"Our situation is truly distressing. The check our detachment sustained on the twenty-seventh ultimo has dispirited too great a proportion of our troops, and filled their minds with apprehension and despair. The militia, instead of calling forth their utmost efforts to a brave and manly opposition in order to repair our losses, are dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return. Great numbers of them have gone off; in some instances, almost by whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies, at a time. This circumstance, of itself, independent of others, when fronted by a well-appointed enemy, superior in numbers to our whole collected force, would be sufficiently disagreeable; but, when their example has infected another part of the army, where their want of discipline, and refusal of almost every kind of restraint and government, have produced a like conduct but too common to the whole, and an entire disregard of that order and subordination necessary to the well-doing of an army, and which had been inculcated before, as well as the nature of our military establishment would admit of — our condition becomes still more alarming; and with the deepest concern, I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops.

"All these circumstances fully confirm the opinion I ever entertained, and which I more than once, in my letters, took the liberty

of mentioning to Congress, that no dependence could be put in a militia, or other troops than those enlisted and embodied for a longer period than our regulations heretofore have prescribed*.... Men who have been free and subject to no control, can not be reduced to order in an instant; and the privileges and exemptions which they claim and will have, influence the conduct of others; and the aid derived from them is nearly counterbalanced by the disorder, irregularity, and confusion they occasion.... Our number of men at present fit for duty, is under twenty thousand; they were so by the last returns and best accounts I could get after the engagement on Long Island; since which numbers have deserted.... Till of late, I had no doubt in my own mind of defending this place; nor should I have yet, if the men would do their duty; but this I despair of. It is painful, and exceeding grating to me, to give such unfavorable accounts; but it would be criminal to conceal the truth at so critical a juncture. Every power I possess shall be exerted to serve the cause; and my first wish is that, whatever may be the event, the Congress will do me the justice to think so."†

Such was the dark and desponding picture that Washington drew of the condition of his army and the prospects for the future, two days after the retreat from Long Island; and two days later still, he wrote the melancholy words: "Our affairs have not undergone a change for the better, nor assumed a more agreeable aspect than before. The militia, under various pretences, are daily diminishing; and in a little time, I am persuaded, their numbers will be very inconsiderable."

Never, during his whole military career, did the lofty and hopeful spirit of the commander-in-chief bow so nearly to the attitude of despair, as during the week succeeding the evacuation of Long Island. And in these gloomy forebodings, his most faithful and cheerful officers largely participated. The enemy, strong and

* In this letter Washington earnestly advocated the establishment of a standing army during the war. His urgent appeals on this subject led to such an establishment a few months later, which will be noticed in the proper place.

† Letter to the President of Congress, September 2, 1776

victorious, had taken possession of the American works at Brooklyn, and garrisoned them with some English and Hessian troops, while the remainder of the army was posted at Bushwick, Newtown, Hell-Gate, and Flushing. The heavy British ships had sailed up the bay, and anchored near Governor's island, within cannon-shot of the city;* and a forty-gun ship, fully manned and armed, had sailed up the East river, in defiance of the active American battery on Stuyvesant's point, and anchored in Turtle bay, almost within call of other ships of the British navy, already in the Sound. A week after the battle, the whole British land force was upon Long Island, excepting about four thousand men left upon Staten Island to overawe the inhabitants of New Jersey.

Almost hourly during that time, fragments of the broken republican army had passed away to their homes. The Connecticut militia had dwindled from six thousand to two thousand; and the troops from below the Delaware, that had found so much merriment in the contemplation of the appearance and character of the rustic New England soldiers, were among the first to suffer from dreadful

* It was while the *Eagle*, Lord Howe's flag-ship, lay near Governor's island that an attempt was made to destroy her by an "infernal machine," called a "Marine Turtle," invented by a mechanic of Saybrook, Connecticut, named Bushnell. Washington approved of the machine, on examination, and desired General Parsons to select a competent man to attempt the hazardous enterprise. The machine was constructed so as to contain a living man, and to be navigated at will under water. A small magazine of gunpowder, so arranged as to be secured to a ship's bottom, could be carried with it. This magazine was furnished with clockwork, constructed so as to operate a spring and communicate a blow to detonating powder, and ignite the gunpowder of the magazine. The motion of this clock-work was sufficiently slow to allow the submarine operator to escape to a safe distance, after securing the magazine to a ship's bottom. General Parsons selected a daring young man, named Ezra Lee. He entered the water at Whitehall, at midnight on the sixth of September. Washington and a few officers watched anxiously until daylight for a result, but the calm waters of the bay were unruffled, and it was believed that the young man had perished. Just at dawn some barges were seen putting off from Governor's island toward an object near the *Eagle*, and suddenly to turn and pull for shore. In a few moments a column of water ascended a few yards from the *Eagle*, the cables of the British ships were instantly cut, and they went down the bay with the ebbing tide, in great confusion. Lee had been under the *Eagle* two hours, trying in vain to penetrate the thick copper on her bottom. He could hear the sentinels above, and when they felt the shock of his "Turtle" striking against the bottom, they expressed a belief that a floating log had passed by. He visited other ships, but their sheathing was too thick to give him success. He came to the surface at dawn, but, attracting the attention of the bargemen at Governor's island, he descended, and made for Whitehall against a strong current. He came up out of reach of musket-shot, was safely landed, and received the congratulations of the commander-in-chief and his officers. Young Lee was afterward employed by Washington in secret service, and was in the battles at Trenton, Brandywine, and Monmouth. He died at Lyme, Connecticut, on the twenty-ninth of October, 1821, aged seventy-two years.—Lossing's "Field-Book of the Revolution, ii., 608, second edition.

homesickness.* These desertions, by so much, increased the physical weakness of the army, and fearfully sapped its moral strength. Yet Washington generously suggested an excuse for their conduct. "The impulse for going home," he said, "was so irresistible, that it answered no purpose to oppose it,"† for such an impulse was natural. It was "not peculiar," he said, "to those from any one state, "but common to all militia, and what must be generally expected; for men, who have been free and never subject to restraint, or any kind of control, can not, in a day, be taught the necessity, nor be brought to see the expediency, of strict discipline."‡

The movements of the enemy, at this time, though dark and mysterious, left no doubt on the mind of Washington, that Howe's greatest efforts would be to get a strong body of his men in the rear of the Americans, hem them in the city, make them prisoners, garrison the town, and thus acquire possession of the key to Hudson's river, and the country toward Canada, and make the separation between New England and the rest of the Union easy and complete. In view of this, Washington, in the letter to Congress from which we have just quoted, asked the important question:—

"If we should be obliged to abandon the town, ought it to stand as winter-quarters for the enemy? They would derive great convenience from it," he said, "on the one hand; and much property would be destroyed, on the other... At present, I dare say the enemy mean to preserve it, if they can. If Congress, therefore, should resolve upon the destruction of it, the resolution should be a profound secret, as the knowledge of it will make a capital change in their plans."

It was indeed an important, yet not a novel question. It had been mooted more than a month before;‖ and the idea had become

* "When I look around," said Reed, himself a Pennsylvanian, "and see how few of the number who talked so loudly of death and honor are around me, and that those who are here, are those from whom it was least expected, I am lost in wonder and surprise. Some of our Philadelphia gentlemen, who came over on a visit, upon the first cannon went off in a most violent hurry. Your noisy Sons of Liberty are, I find, the quietest in the field.... An engagement, or even the expectation of one, gives a wonderful insight into character."—Letter to Mrs. Reed, September 6, 1776. Life and Correspondence of President Reed, i., 231.

† Letter to Congress, September 8, 1776.

‡ Letter to Governor Trumbull, September 9, 1776.

‖ Life and Correspondence of President Reed, i., 213.

so prevalent in the city, that the New York convention inquired of Washington, on the twenty-second of August, whether, in the event of his evacuating the town, he intended to destroy it. He replied that "nothing but the last necessity" would induce him to give orders for that purpose. But after the disastrous conflict of the twenty-seventh, circumstances were so changed, that the commander-in-chief and most of his officers were in favor of it. Some were urgent. General Greene, believing "a speedy retreat to be absolutely necessary," said in a letter to Washington on the sixth of September (for he was yet too ill to leave his bed): "I would burn the city and suburbs;" and then gave his reasons for the advice, at some length. And so confident was Greene that it would be done, that in a letter to a friend, written on the same day, after expressing a belief that a retreat would be ordered, said: "If this is the case, two to one New York city is laid in ashes." John Jay, then active in civil life, was in favor of desolating the whole country below the Highlands, and filling the river with rocks at Anthony's Nose, so that "nothing but an Albany sloop could pass;" and the idea that New York would be destroyed was generally prevalent, not only among the Americans, but in the British camp.*

But the Congress, on the receipt of Washington's letter, decreed otherwise, and directed him to take special care, in case of an evacuation, that no damage should be done to the city, they "having no doubt of their being able to recover the same, though the enemy should, for a time, obtain possession of it."† The scheme, of course, was abandoned.

The clouds grew darker and more threatening. Desertions continued, and the army became weaker and weaker every day. Hopes of a successful defence of the city rapidly faded, and on the seventh of September, Washington called a council of the general

* There were many rumors on this point in the British camp. At one time it was reported that "a dreadful fray" had occurred in New York, the New-Englanders having determined to burn the city, while the New-Yorkers opposed them. Again, that "the Pennsylvanians had joined the New-Englanders" in the project. Again, that Washington had attempted to send three New York battalions out of the city, and to replace them with an equal number from Connecticut, but that the former, hearing that the latter intended to burn the city, refused to go.

† Journal of Congress, September 2, 1776.

officers, "in order to take a full and comprehensive view" of their situation, and form plans for the future. "It is now extremely obvious," he said, that the enemy "mean to enclose us on the island of New York, by taking post in our rear while the shipping effectually secures the front; and thus, either by cutting off our communication with the country, oblige us to fight them on their own terms, or surrender at discretion, or by a brilliant stroke, endeavor to cut this army in pieces, and secure the collection of arms and stores which they well know we shall not be able soon to replace."*

With this perception of the enemy's system of operations, the council took into consideration how it might be most effectually opposed. "In deliberating on this great question," said Washington, "it was impossible to forget, that history, our own experience, the advice of our ablest friends in Europe, the fears of the enemy, and even the declarations of Congress, demonstrate that on our side the war should be defensive (it has even been called a war of posts), that we should on all occasions avoid a general action, or put anything to risk unless compelled by a necessity into which we ought never to be drawn."†

This was a favorite system with Washington from the beginning, and throughout the war, and he endeavored to impress a conviction of its utility upon the council at this time. He had never spared the spade and pickaxe, for he had found it to be presumptuous to draw out young troops into open ground against those superior in numbers and discipline, at the same time it was difficult to make them keep position behind breastworks, unless there seemed to be a fair chance for success. In this view of the matter, with the conviction that the city would not be tenable should it be bombarded and cannonaded, he proposed an immediate evacuation of it, and the forming of a strongly intrenched camp at Mount Washington, near the upper end of the island, leaving the town unharmed according to the will of the Congress.

The council were divided in their views. All agreed that the

* Washington to the President of Congress, September 8, 1776. † Ibid.

city would be untenable under the circumstances named. Putnam and several others were favorable to a total and immediate removal from the town to the upper part of the island. General Mercer was too ill to attend in person, and sent a letter, in which he advised the retention of the city, because the acquisition of it by the enemy would "give eclat to the arms of Great Britain, afford good winter-quarters for her soldiers," and furnish a safe harbor for her ships. In these views several officers concurred, while General Greene reiterated his advice for the army to abandon the city and island, burn the former, desolate the latter, and take post at Kingsbridge. He urged that as two thirds of the city and suburbs belonged to tories, therefore, there was no great reason why the republicans should risk much in defending it; and as it would furnish capital winter-quarters, and a convenient depot for supplies for the use of the enemy, he advised the application of the torch.

A middle course was agreed upon. Putnam, with five thousand men, was to remain stationed in the city, while Heath, with nine thousand, including the remnants of the Pennsylvania and Delaware regiments, was to guard the upper part of the island, having his chief post at Kingsbridge. A third division, under the command of Generals Greene and Spencer, composed principally of militia, were to be stationed near the centre of the island, along the shores of Kip's and Turtle bays, to prevent the landing of any troops from the British camp on Long Island.

While these anxieties, deliberations, and projects were occupying the attention of the commander-in-chief, another important movement was in progress. Lord Howe, no doubt sincerely desirous of a speedy and satisfactory reconciliation, and believing that the disasters to the Americans in the late battle would make them more disposed to listen to peaceful propositions, sent General Sullivan, on his parole, to Philadelphia, with a verbal message to the continental Congress, proposing an informal conference with persons whom that body might appoint. Impressed with the belief that Lord Howe possessed more ample discretionary powers than Parliament had expressed in his appointment, the Congress, after

debating the subject three or four days, consented to appoint a committee to confer with his lordship; not, however, as private gentlemen, but as representatives of the federal legislature, who should wait upon his lordship, and hear what propositions he had to make. At the same time, the president was requested to acquaint General Washington, that "no proposal for making peace between Great Britain and the United States of America, ought to be received or attended to, unless the same be made in writing, and addressed to the representatives of the states, or persons authorized by them;" and that if such application should be made, he was to inform them that the United States would "cheerfully agree to peace on reasonable terms."*

John Adams, Doctor Franklin, and Edward Rutledge were appointed to confer with Lord Howe. The eleventh of September was agreed upon as the time for the meeting; and the house of Colonel Billop, a tory living upon Staten Island, opposite Amboy where Mercer's flying camp was then stationed, the place. The committee set out on the ninth, Adams on horseback, and the other two in chairs.† On the way they were mortified and made indignant, by seeing large numbers of officers and soldiers idling and drinking at taverns, and loitering along the roads, when their services were so much needed at New York.

The commissioners tarried all night at Brunswick. The taverns were full, and Franklin and Adams were compelled to occupy one bed in a very small room without a chimney. This gave rise to a discussion, and Adams went to sleep while Franklin was giving him a lecture on his theory of colds contracted by sleeping with open windows.‡

On their arrival at Amboy, the commissioners found Lord Howe's barge in waiting for them, with a British officer who had been sent to remain as a hostage with General Mercer. The pledge was not accepted by the committee; and when the admiral met them on

* Journals of Congress, September 5, 1776.

† The *chair* was a two-wheeled vehicle, with a top, similar in form, but larger, than the *gig* of the present time, now used mostly by physicians.

‡ An interesting account of this matter is given in the "Life and Works of John Adams," iii., 75

the island shore, he expressed his great gratification because of this mark of confidence in his honor. He then frankly told them that he could not treat with them as a committee of Congress, but must confer with them only as private gentlemen. To this Franklin, who was personally acquainted with the admiral, replied, that he might consider them in whatever light he chose, their business being only to hear; but that they should consider themselves in no other position than that of a committee of the Congress.

Lord Howe then spoke at some length on the subject of the conference, but his discourse "contained no explicit proposition of peace, except one, namely: that the colonies should return to their allegiance to Great Britain." The commissioners assured him "that a return to the domination of Great Britain was not now to be expected." They then recited, in brief, the grievances of which the colonists complained, and the contempt with which their respectful and humble petitions to the king and Parliament had been treated. They reminded him that it was not until the late act of Parliament "that denounced war" against them, and put them out of the king's protection, that they had declared their independence, and that now it was out of the power of the Congress to reverse that solemn judgment of the people."*

Perceiving that the conference would be barren of wished-for results, Lord Howe put an end to it, saying that he was sorry no accommodation was likely to take place.† He then spoke, with a good deal of emotion, of the honors paid by Massachusetts to the memory of his elder brother, who was killed at Ticonderoga, and

* Report of the Commissioners to Congress, September 17, 1776.

† An account of this conference, which the writer took special pains to assert might be "relied on as strictly true," was published in the "London Chronicle," and passed current in England as veritable history. The writer disposed of the matter in a few words. After asserting that General Sullivan begged permission to go to New York and Philadelphia, to propose a conference, and that a flag came down from Washington, asking safe conduct for three delegates from the "Grand Congress," he says: "They came on board the *Eagle*, when his lordship asked how they expected to be treated? Adams said, 'As delegates from the free and independent states of America.' His lordship made them no reply, but turned upon his heel with a sneer, and ordered the American ambassadors away immediately." It was with such mischievous falsehoods as these, put forth by American loyalists, that the people of England were deceived, and were taught to look with contempt upon the "miserable rebels" who had dared to defy the power of their sovereign. "The very chimney-sweepers," said Pitt at an earlier day, "talked of *our subjects in America*."

said that such was his gratitude, and his affection for this country, that he "felt for America as a brother, and, if America should fall, he should feel and lament it like the loss of a brother." Doctor Franklin, with an expressive bow and smile, said politely: "My lord, we will do our utmost endeavors to save your lordship that mortification."—"I suppose," replied Howe, with equal significance and considerable feeling, "you will endeavor to give us employment n Europe."*

Thus ended this famous conference. The actors parted in perfect good nature, well convinced that reconciliation was out of the question.† The result was beneficial. The whole proceedings were published; and the popular idea that the British commissioners possessed powers beyond those expressed in the act of Parliament, was at once discarded. The Americans were convinced that Great Britain had determined upon the absolute submission of the colonies. This conviction inflamed the zeal of the patriots, and the standard of resistance was planted firmer than ever before.

* John Adams's Autobiography.

† Doctor Franklin and Lord Howe had exchanged sentiments upon public affairs recently. While on his voyage to New York, Howe wrote a letter to Franklin on the subject of reconciliation. It was forwarded immediately after his lordship's arrival at Sandy Hook. To this Franklin made an earnest reply on the twentieth of July. It was marked by a warmth of feeling not often exhibited by that calm philosopher and statesman, and showed the depth of his feelings. "Directing pardons to be offered the colonies," said Franklin, "who are the very parties injured, expresses, indeed, that opinion of our ignorance, baseness, and insensibility, which your uninformed and proud nation has long been pleased to entertain of us; but it can have no other effect than that of increasing our resentment. It is impossible we should think of submission to a government, that has, with the most wanton barbarity and cruelty, burnt our defenceless towns in the midst of winter, excited the savages to massacre our farmers, and our slaves to murder their masters, and is even now bringing foreign mercenaries to deluge our settlements with blood. These atrocious injuries have extinguished every remaining spark of affection for that parent country we once held so dear; but, were it possible for *us* to forget and forgive them, it is not possible for you (I mean the British nation) to forgive the people you have so heavily injured." Franklin said much more, in severe rebuke of the course of Great Britain, and then remarked: "The well-founded esteem, and, permit me to say, affection, which I shall always have for your lordship, makes it painful to me to see you engaged in conducting a war, the ground of which, as expressed in your letter, is 'the necessity of preventing the American trade from passing into foreign channels.' To me it seems, that neither the obtaining or retaining of any trade, how valuable soever, is an object for which men may justly spill each other's blood... I know your great motive in coming hither was the hope of being instrumental in a reconciliation; and, I believe, when you find *that* impossible on any terms given you to propose, you will relinquish so odious a command, and return to a more honorable private station."—Sparks's Life and Writings of Franklin, v., 99

CHAPTER XXI.

WASHINGTON STILL DESIROUS TO LEAVE NEW YORK — CONGRESS LEAVES THE MATTER TO HIS DISCRETION — ANOTHER COUNCIL-OF-WAR — EVACUATION RESOLVED UPON AND COMMENCED — REMOVAL OF STORES AND TROOPS — CAPTAIN HALE SENT TO THE BRITISH CAMP AS A SPY — ALARMING MOVEMENTS OF THE ENEMY — BRITISH INVASION FROM LONG ISLAND — BAD CONDUCT OF AMERICAN TROOPS — WASHINGTON'S ANGER AND PERIL — POSITION OF THE BRITISH TROOPS ON YORK ISLAND — ESCAPE OF PUTNAM AND HIS MEN FROM NEW YORK — AMERICANS INTRENCHED ON HARLEM HEIGHTS — EXECUTION OF HALE AS A SPY — SKIRMISH ON HARLEM PLAINS — THE AMERICANS VICTORIOUS — HOWE'S MISGIVINGS — GREAT FIRE IN NEW YORK — WASHINGTON'S ABLE LETTER TO CONGRESS ON THE STATE OF THE ARMY — NEW ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY RESOLVED UPON.

WASHINGTON was not satisfied with the decision of the majority of the council of officers concerning the abandonment of New York. He was convinced not only of the propriety, but of the absolute necessity of such a movement, and in a letter to the Congress on the eighth, he said: "That the enemy mean to winter in New York, there can be no doubt; that with such an armament, they can drive us out, is equally clear. The Congress having resolved that it should not be destroyed, nothing seems to remain but to determine the time of their taking possession."

On the receipt of this letter, the Congress hastened to inform Washington that they left it to his discretion to occupy or abandon the city;* whereupon he called another council of officers on the twelfth. The opinions of several had changed, meanwhile, and all but Generals Spencer, Heath, and George Clinton, agreed that the removal of the army was prudent and necessary.

Already convinced of this necessity, Washington had made

* Journal of Congress, September 10, 1776.

arrangements for removing all stores not needed for immediate use; and as soon as the council made their decision, the evacuation commenced, under the general superintendence of Colonel Glover. The sick were taken to New Jersey, and the public stores were conveyed to Dobb's Ferry, on the Hudson, twenty miles from the city. On the thirteenth, the main body of the army, accompanied by many whigs, their families and effects, moved toward Mount Washington and Kingsbridge, while a rear guard of four thousand men, under Putnam, was left in the city, with orders to follow, if necessary. While this movement was going on, three British frigates, and a forty-gun ship sailed up the East river, pouring shot incessantly upon the American batteries, and anchored near the *Rose*, off Stuyvesant's point. Washington had watched their progress with interest, and rode to the battery at the point, unmindful of danger. As he entered the works there, a cannon ball fell within six feet of him.

Movements of the enemy now threatened an immediate attempt, on their part, to cut off the retreat of the Americans, and on the following day, Washington ordered his baggage to Kingsbridge, intending to establish his headquarters there. He remained at the house of a Quaker merchant, on Murray hill, during the day, and there a plan, so fatal to a brave, young American officer, was arranged. Washington was extremely anxious to ascertain the intended movements of the enemy, and this knowledge could only be obtained by a spy. He applied to Colonel Knowlton for a man to send on the perilous errand, and that officer immediately appealed to his own fine regiment, in the name of the commander-in chief. Captain Nathan Hale, of Coventry, Connecticut, volunteered, and instantly departed, with his life in his hand, for the British camp on Long Island. He had just left, when six more British ships sailed up the East river toward Hell-Gate; and the twilight had not faded when couriers came in hot haste, first from Colonel Sargent, at Horn's hook, and next from General Mifflin, at Kingsbridge, informing Washington that three or four thousand of the enemy were crossing the channel from Hallet's cove, and

landing upon Buchanan's and Montressor's (now Ward's and Randall's) islands.

This was truly alarming intelligence, and an immediate landing at Morrisania and Harlem was expected. But nothing remarkable occurred that night. Early the next morning three ships-of-war went up Hudson's river as far as Bloomingdale, in the face of a heavy cannonade from the American batteries along the shore.* This, of course, put a stop to the further removal of stores to Dobb's Ferry.

Operations commenced upon the East river at about the same time; and at eleven o'clock a British and Hessian division, under Sir Henry Clinton and Count Donop, more than four thousand strong, commenced crossing the river in flatboats from Newtown creek, and landing at Kip's bay, covered by a severe cannonade from ten ships-of-war, whose guns played briskly upon the American batteries between Turtle bay and Stuyvesant's point. It was Sunday morning, the fifteenth of September, and Washington had advanced to Mott's tavern, on Harlem plains. When he heard the firing he rode with speed toward the scene of action. A most mortifying and alarming spectacle was presented. The militia, who manned the batteries, had fled at the approach of the enemy; and the brigades of Parsons and Fellows, of Putnam's Connecticut troops, who had been sent that morning to support them, had caught the panic, and fled without firing a gun, when only about fifty of the British had landed. Washington met the fugitives, and used every means in his power to stop the flight. Their generals tried in vain to rally them; and when sixty or seventy of the enemy appeared in pursuit, the panic was increased, and they all ran away in the greatest confusion, leaving Washington alone within eighty yards of the foe. This dastardly conduct so incensed the general, that he lost the usual control of his powerful passions,

* One of these vessels was the *Asia*, of sixty-four guns, that had been upon the station for a year. Captain Silas Talbot, then with the army and anxious to be useful, attempted her destruction by a fire-ship. He proceeded cautiously from the foot of Mount Washington, at two o'clock on the morning of the sixteenth, and was soon along side of the enemy, with his ship in a blaze. Lingering too long, he was badly burned, but escaped to the Jersey shore in safety. The *Asia* managed to extricate herself, and was saved.

and for the first time since he had been at the head of the army, he gave them free rein. In his rage he cast his chapeau to the ground, snapped his pistols at several of the fugitives, and threatened others with his sword. He seemed to be utterly unconscious of personal danger, and would doubtless have fallen into the hands of the enemy, had not his attendants seized the bridle of his horse and hurried him away toward a place of safety. He was so "vexed at the infamous conduct of his troops," said General Greene, "that he sought death rather than life." This paroxysm of anger was of short duration, and the chief, with his usual self-possession, took immediate measures for the safety of his imperilled army. It was ordered to retreat immediately toward Harlem heights; and an express was sent to Putnam, in the city, directing him to evacuate it instantly.

Unopposed, the British landed in full force at Kip's bay, and after skirmishing with the advance of Glover's brigade, who had reached the scene too late for effectual opposition, they marched almost to the centre of the island, and encamped upon the Incleberg, an eminence westward of Murray hill.

Satisfied with this achievement, Howe, with nearly all of his general officers, went to the fine house of Robert Murray, recently left by Washington, for refreshments and rest, instead of pushing on toward the city and achieving a more important result, by the capture of Putnam and his four thousand men. Mrs. Murray was a stanch whig, and knowing the value of time to the old veteran in jeopardy, used all her art to detain her new guests. With smiles and pleasant conversation, and a profusion of cakes and wine, she regaled them for almost two hours, and their troops were resting upon their arms at the same time. Putnam, meanwhile, had received and obeyed Washington's orders, and a greater portion of his troops, concealed by the thick woods, and led by Major Aaron Burr, who was familiar with the way, escaped along the Bloomingdale road, and had passed the encampment upon the Incleberg before the retreat was discovered. The rear-guard was attacked by some British light-infantry, just as a heavy shower of

rain began to fall; and the drenched army, after losing fifteen men killed, and three hundred made prisoners, reached Harlem heights, and slept in the open air that night.

Putnam's escape mortified the British officers, and General Robertson was sent with a strong force to take immediate possession of the city. Howe made his headquarters at the elegant mansion of James Beekman, upon Mount Pleasant, a high bank overlooking Turtle bay, on the East river, and before sunset his troops were encamped in a line extending from Horn's hook across the island to Bloomingdale. Harlem plains divided the hostile camps; and for seven years two months and ten days from that time, the city of New York remained in possession of the British troops.

For more than seven months General Howe occupied that pleasant mansion; and there Captain Hale, who had been arrested as a spy, was brought before him, while the dense smoke of a great conflagration was brooding over the city of New York. That conflagration, then supposed to be the work of republican hands, no doubt increased the rigor of Hale's treatment. His truthful lips frankly confessed his mission; and almost without the form of a trial, he was condemned to death. The infamous Cunningham, the British provost-marshall, into whose bloody hands the young hero was placed, was ordered to hang him the next morning at daybreak. The consolations of a present bible or clergyman were denied him; and the letters which he had written to his mother and sisters during the night, were destroyed by the brutal provost-marshall when Hale was led to the death-tree in Rutger's orchard. "I only regret that I have but one life to give to my country!" said the martyr; and half an hour afterward his body was laid in a shallow grave, beneath the leafy gibbet on which he had suffered.

Washington established his headquarters upon Harlem heights, at the house of Roger Morris, his old friend and companion-in-arms, and his rival-suitor for the hand of Mary Phillipse. Upon that range of hills he established a fortified camp, which comprised nearly the whole of the narrow neck of land between Hudson's and Harlem river, from the present Manhattanville to Kingsbridge.

Upon the highest point of this range stood Fort Washington, a strong work with respectable ravelins; and about a mile and a half south of it was a double line of intrenchments extending across the neck from river to river. To strengthen these, every man capable of handling a spade or pickaxe was set at work, and under skillful direction, an almost impregnable front to the camp was presented. There were also strong advanced posts upon Mount Morris, at Harlem, at M'Gowan's pass, at the entrance to a rocky gorge at the southern extremity of Harlem plains, and on the height overlooking Harlem cove, or Manhattanville.

Washington felt great confidence in these works, and in a letter to the president of Congress, on the day of the retreat to the heights, he said that there, he "should hope, the enemy would meet with a defeat in case of an attack, if the generality of the troops would behave with tolerable bravery." Then remembering the stinging events of the previous day, he added—"But experience, to my extreme affliction, has convinced me that this is rather to be wished for than expected. However, I trust that there are many who will act like men, and show themselves worthy of the blessings of freedom."*

The courier had just departed with this letter, when intelligence reached Washington that the enemy were advancing in three strong columns. Adjutant-General Reed was immediately despatched to obtain exact information, and the commander-in-chief rode down to the outer line of intrenchments to put matters in a proper situation, if they should attempt to storm them. There he heard a brisk firing upon the plains, and in a few minutes Colonel Reed came galloping back, with intelligence that the enemy, three hundred strong, under General Leslie, were pushing forward, and had already attacked Colonel Knowlton and his rangers at M'Gowan's pass. Knowlton and his men soon followed, for they had been driven from their post, and that brave officer had sought the commander-in-chief for further orders.

At that time "the enemy appeared in open view, and sounded

* From Morris's house, September 16, 1776.

their bugles in a most insulting manner, as is usual after a fox chase."* This brought the disgrace of the previous day vividly to the mind of Washington, and he resolved to wipe it out by accepting this taunting challenge. He ordered out a party to attack them, consisting of Knowlton's rangers, and three companies of Weedon's Virginia regiment, under Major Leitch. They were directed to gain the rear of the enemy, while a feigned attack should be made in front. The vigilant Leslie perceived this, and advanced rapidly to gain an advantageous position upon the plains, where he was attacked upon the flank by Knowlton and Leitch. A part of his force, that had been concealed upon the wooded hills, now came down, and the enemy, changing front, fell upon the Americans with vigor. A short but severe conflict ensued. Leitch was soon borne from the field, pierced with three bullets. A few moments afterward Knowlton was brought to the ground by a musket-ball in his head, and Colonel Reed, who had accompanied the party, bore him away upon his horse.† Their men fought on bravely, disputing the ground, inch by inch, as they fell back toward the American camp, and were severely pressed until reinforced by a part of the Maryland regiments of Griffiths and Richardson, when the tide of battle was turned. The British were driven back across the plain, hotly pursued by the republicans, till Washington, fearing an ambush, ordered a retreat.

The result of this engagement was very inspiriting to the Americans. They had fought a more numerous enemy for four hours, driven them from the field, and had only about fifteen men killed. Washington made the most of the affair, and in general orders, on the morning of the seventeenth, he praised the victors and said: "The behavior of yesterday was such a contrast to that of some troops the day before, as must show what may be done where officers and soldiers exert themselves." Then calling upon officers

* Colonel Reed to his wife.

† Reed conveyed the dying Knowlton to a redoubt near the Hudson, where he expired before sunset. "I assisted him off," said Reed to his wife, "and when gasping in the agonies of death, all his inquiry was if we had driven in the enemy." He was buried within the redoubt wherein he expired. His death was a great public loss, and was deplored by the whole army. Major Leitch lived a fortnight. He died on the first of October.

and men to "act up to the noble cause," he spoke of "the gallant and brave Knowlton, who would have been an honor to any country."

General Howe now experienced serious misgivings concerning the future. He had gained a victory on Long Island—a victory for which he received the honors of knighthood—but it promised little for final success. He had been entirely misled in relation to the temper of the Americans. There were fewer royalists, and more numerous and stronger republicans than he had been led to expect; and, notwithstanding he commanded a much superior force, he was by no means sanguine of success against the rebel chief. To the ministry he wrote, on the twenty-fifth of September: "The enemy is too strongly posted to be attacked in front, and innumerable difficulties are in our way of turning him on either side, though his army is much dispirited from the late success of his majesty's arms; yet have I not the smallest prospect of finishing the combat this campaign, nor until the rebels see preparations in the spring, that may preclude all thoughts of further resistance."

When Howe wrote this despatch, a large part of the city of New York—that fine city which promised him comfortable winter-quarters—was laid in ashes. General Robertson, who led the van of the British to take possession of the town, had scarcely pitched his tents in the suburbs, when, a little past midnight on the morning of the twenty-first of September, a bright flame shot up from the lower extremity of the city. With marvellous celerity it spread over the most valuable portions of the town before sunrise, consuming five hundred buildings. The conflagration was plainly seen from the camp on Harlem heights, and the next morning Captain Montressor bore a letter to Washington from General Howe, on the subject of prisoners, and gave a detailed account of the calamity. He said it was the work of American incendiaries, and that several of them, caught in the act, had been killed on the spot by the enraged British soldiers. This assertion was proven to be untrue. The fire was the result of accident.*

* An investigation proved that the fire originated in a low groggery and brothel, a wooden building on the wharf, near Whitehall slip. The wind was from the southwest, and the flames spread

The victory on Harlem plains caused a temporary pause in the movements of the British, and Washington employed those moments of comparative repose, in strengthening his camp, and in devising means for strengthening his army also.* The latter subject had given him many anxious thoughts, for some time. The organization of the army effected at Cambridge, at the close of 1775, made the enlistments for one year only; and now the time was drawing near when the term of service of a greater portion of his troops would expire. He had, of late, frequently called the attention of Congress to the matter, always urging the necessity of longer terms of enlistment, and the expediency of offering bounties. From Harlem heights, on the twentieth of September, he wrote to the president of Congress, and again urged the necessity of immediate action, saying, in conclusion: "It is a melancholy and painful consideration to those who are concerned in the work and have the command, to be forming armies constantly, and to be left by troops just when they begin to deserve

rapidly, for there were but few inhabitants in the city to oppose them. The wind soon veered to the southeast, and all the lower and western side of the town, including Trinity church, was laid in ruins before sunrise. "The ruins," says the late Mr. Dunlap (who wandered over the scene at the close of the war), "on the southeast side of the town, were converted into dwelling-places by using chimneys and parts of walls which were firm, and adding pieces of spars with old canvass from the ships, forming hovels — part hut and part tent." This was called Canvass Town, and there the vilest of the army and tory refugees congregated. The tory and British writers of the day tried hard to fix the crime of incendiarism upon the whigs, but could not. General Howe, satisfied that the conflagration originated in accident, did not allude to incendiaries in his official despatch.

* It was at this time that Washington first became personally acquainted with Alexander Hamilton, who was in command of an artillery company, attached to the provincial service of New York. Washington observed him casting up an earthwork with great skill, and entering into conversation with him, was so pleased that he invited him to his quarters. The interview gave the sagacious mind of the commander-in-chief a clear perception of the genius of Hamilton, and he at once recalled the words of praise which General Greene had bestowed upon the young subaltern several months before. In passing through the Fields (now City-Hall park) one day, Greene observed the exercises of a corp of artillery, and was struck with the skill displayed by their commander. It was Hamilton's corps, raised by his own exertions, chiefly from among his fellow-students in Columbia college, and which were then connected with the provincial establishment. That corps, the previous year, had assisted in carrying the cannon away from the Battery; and now its leader so impressed Greene with his military genius, that he spoke warmly of him to the commander-in-chief. In the retreat from Long Island, Hamilton's corps brought up the rear, and he lost a field-piece; and in the several stirring scenes that speedily occurred from the time of the encampment on Harlem heights, until the battles of Trenton and Princeton, he was very active and conspicuous. Washington never lost sight of him; and six months after this first interview at the trenches, Hamilton was a member of Washington's military family, having the rank of lieutenant-colonel. A strong mutual attachment was formed, which, with a brief interruption, continued through life, and was highly honorable to the head and heart of both.

the name, or, perhaps, at a moment when an important blow is expected."

Four days afterward, Washington wrote one of the ablest letters that he had yet addressed to the Congress. He took for the purpose, he said, "hours allotted to sleep;" and in a masterly manner he discoursed upon the condition and prospects of the army, with the clear logic of a statesman, philosopher, and wise commander. Adverting to the fact that the eve of another dissolution of the army was at hand, and the remembered difficulties that had beset him during the past year, he told them plainly that it was "in vain to expect that any, or more than a trifling part of the army would again engage in the service, on the encouragement offered by Congress." He viewed the whole matter in the light of common sense reflected upon the character of human nature, and showed that "the few who act upon principles of disinterestedness, comparatively speaking, are no more than a drop in the ocean."

"It becomes evident to me then," he said, "that, as this contest is not likely to be the work of a day, as the war must be carried on systematically, and to do it you must have good officers, there are no other possible means to obtain them but by establishing your army upon a permanent footing, and giving your officers good pay. This will induce gentlemen and men of character to engage; and, till the bulk of your officers is composed of such persons as are actuated by principles of honor and a spirit of enterprise, you have little to expect from them. They ought to have such allowances as will enable them to live like, and support the character of gentlemen, and not be driven by a scanty pittance to the low and dirty arts, which many of them practise, to filch from the public more than the difference of pay would amount to upon an ample allowance. Besides, something is due to the man who puts his life in your hands, hazards his health, and forsakes the sweets of domestic enjoyment. Why a captain in the continental service should receive no more than five shillings currency, per day, for performing the same duties that an officer of the same rank in the British service receives ten shillings sterling for, I never could

conceive; especially when the latter is provided with every necessary he requires upon the best terms, and the former can scarce procure them, at any rate. There is nothing that gives a man consequence, and renders him fit for command, like a support that renders him independent of everybody but the state he serves."

Washington then urged the importance of offering a good bounty to obtain more soldiers upon a permanent establishment, and for no shorter time than a continuance of the war. He gave it as hi opinion, that not only a good bounty should be offered, but also a proffer of at least one hundred, or one hundred and fifty acres of land, and a suit of clothes and blanket, to each non-commissioned officer and soldier. "If this encouragement then is given to the men," he said, "and such pay allowed the officers as will induce gentlemen of character and liberal sentiments to engage, and proper care and precaution are used in the nomination, more regard being had to the character of persons, than to the number of men they can enlist, we should, in a little time, have an army able to cope with any that can be opposed to it, as there are excellent materials to form one out of. But while the only merit an officer possesses is his ability to raise men, while those men consider and treat him as an equal, and, in the character of an officer, regard him no more than a broomstick, being mixed together as one common herd, no order nor discipline can prevail; nor will the officer ever meet with that respect which is essentially necessary to due subordination."

The commander-in-chief then adverted to the little dependence to be placed upon raw militia in an emergency. The rules and regulations of war, for the government of the army, he said, were so relax and unfit, that the militia did not consider themselves subject to them, and they took liberties which the regular soldier was punished for. "This," he said, "creates jealousy; jealousy begets dissatisfaction; and this by degrees ripens into mutiny, keeping the whole army in a confused and disordered state, rendering the time of those who wish to see regularity and good order prevail, more unhappy than words can describe. Besides these,"

he continued, "such repeated changes take place, that all arrangement is set at nought, and the constant fluctuations of things derange every plan as fast as it is adopted."*

He ably reviewed the comparative expenses of militia and a standing-army, and the remoteness of the evils to be apprehended from the jealousy of the latter in the public mind. He then spoke with much warmth concerning the conduct of regimental surgeons: "many of whom," he said, "are very great rascals, countenancing the men in sham complaints to exempt them from duty, and often receiving bribes to certify indispositions, with a view to procure discharges or furloughs;" and he gave it as his opinion, that they were aiming to break up the general hospital, asserting that they had, "in numberless instances, drawn for medicines and stores in the most profuse and extravagant manner, for private purposes."

He drew a faithful but melancholy picture of the immorality that prevailed in the army, the lust for plunder overlying every sentiment of honor and patriotism, and the want of laws to punish offenders, rendering his efforts to stem the tide of corruption, as useless as an attempt "to move Mount Atlas." And to give the Congress some idea of the state of things in camp, and the necessity of great care in the choice of officers, he adduced an instance given in the proceedings of a court-martial, which he transmitted to them. An officer, at the head of a party of men, had plundered a dwelling of pier-glasses, women's clothing, "and other articles which one would think were of no earthly use to him;" and when he was met by a major of brigade, and ordered to return the goods, he refused, drew his men up in an attitude of defiance, and swore that he would defend his plunder "at the hazard of his life."

"In a word," Washington said in concluding this able letter, "the difficulties which have for ever surrounded me since I have been

* To his brother, John Augustine, Washington wrote at this time: "It is not in the power of words to describe the task I have to perform. Fifty thousand pounds would not induce me again to undergo what I have done."

in the service, and kept my mind constantly upon the stretch; the wounds which my feelings as an officer have received by a thousand things, that have happened contrary to my expectations and wishes; the effect of my own conduct, and present appearance of things, so little pleasing to myself, as to render it a matter of no surprise to me if I should stand capitally censured by Congress; added to a consciousness of my inability to govern an army composed of such discordant parts, and under such a variety of intricate and perplexing circumstances—induce not only a belief, but a thorough conviction in my mind, that it will be impossible, unless there is a thorough change in our military system, for me to conduct matters in such a manner as to give satisfaction to the public, which is all the recompense I aim at, or ever wished for."*

Washington's frequent importunities, and the progress of events which verified his predictions, and justified his judgment, had produced the desired effect upon the Congress. For more than three weeks previous to the writing of the letter just cited, they had debated the subject of which it treated, and had, in a measure, anticipated the wishes of the commander-in-chief, but without his knowledge. The declaration of independence had wrought great changes in the minds of many, because it had altered the relative position of men and measures. Many who had hoped for reconciliation now saw that no ground for such hope existed, and they were favorable to a more permanent organization of the army, so that the inevitable war might be prosecuted to its termination as speedily as possible. This was the unanimous sentiment of the Congress after the battle at Brooklyn; and, on the sixteenth of September, it was resolved, that "eighty-eight battalions be enlisted, as soon as possible, to serve during the war," and that each state should furnish its respective quota.† A bounty of twenty dollars and one hundred acres of land, were offered to each non-commis

* Letter to the President of Congress, September 24, 1776. Sparks's Washington, iv., 110.

† These were as follows: New Hampshire, three battalions; Massachusetts Bay, fifteen; Rhode Island, two; Connecticut, eight; New York, four; New Jersey, four; Pennsylvania, twelve; Delaware, one; Maryland, eight; Virginia fifteen; North Carolina, nine; South Carolina, six; Georgia, one.

sioned officer and private soldier who should enlist for the war, and the commissioned officers were likewise offered lands in certain quantities and proportions. Upon the several states was devolved the business of enlisting and furnishing the troops to fill up their respective quotas; and the president of Congress addressed a circular letter to each of the states, urging immediate and efficient action in the matter, and requesting them to adopt measures for securing skillful and honorable surgeons for their regiments. The articles of war were completely revised; and a committee, consisting of Roger Sherman, Elbridge Gerry, and Francis Lewis, was appointed to repair to the camp, consult with General Washington, and assist in carrying out the plans for the new military organization.

The committee reached headquarters on the twenty-fourth, bearing to Washington the certified proceedings of the Congress. These gave him some relief, and he began to see light breaking upon the brooding darkness, although it was not very promising. He readily perceived many serious, if not fatal defects in the plan that had been matured. Too much was left to the tardy and incongruous action of the state governments; and he lamented the lack of supreme power in the Congress. Referring to the evils experienced at Cambridge in organizing the army, when it was extremely difficult to know the sentiments of the officers on the spot, each one having some terms to propose, he said: "What must it be then, under the present regulation, when the officers are to negotiate this matter with the state they come from, distant, perhaps, two or three hundred miles, some of whom, without leave or license from me, set out to make personal application, the moment the resolve got into their hands.... A committee sent to the army from each state may, upon the spot, fix things with a degree of propriety and certainty; and it is the only method I can see of bringing matters to a decision with respect to the officers of the army."*

Washington was also persuaded that officers of characters, such

* Letter to Congress, October 4, 1776.

as the army needed, would not remain in the service without increased pay; nor would the common soldier while his pay was inadequate to the wants of himself and family. He pointed out these defects with a clearness that produced conviction, and the Congress proceeded to remedy them in a measure. The pay of officers was increased; a suit of clothes annually was offered to the common soldier in addition to his land and money bounty; and the states were requested to send commissioners to the army, with full powers to arrange with the general-in-chief, the appointment of all the officers. The amended plan was modified before it went into effect; and, finally, the tardy action of the states in providing for the appointment of officers, caused the Congress to authorize Washington to fill up the vacancies. At the best, the whole plan was a defective one. The jealousy of state sovereignty, and the fears of a standing-army, clogged every movement, and the chief was subjected to the most vexatious interferences. "I see such a distrust and jealousy of military power," he said, "that the commander-in-chief has not an opportunity, even by recommendation, to give the least assurance of reward for the most essential services. In a word, such a cloud of perplexing circumstances appear before me, without one flattering hope, that I am thoroughly convinced, that unless the most vigorous and decisive exertions are immediately adopted to remedy these evils, the certain absolute loss of our liberties will be the inevitable consequence."

This practical refusal of full confidence in the commander-in-chief, by the Congress, was productive of the most serious evils, and it was not until he was left untrammelled by that body, a few weeks later, that full success cheered his efforts.

CHAPTER XXII.

PERPLEXING OPERATIONS OF THE ENEMY — CONJECTURES — TORIES MUSTERED INTO THE BRITISH SERVICE — DE LANCY AND ROGERS — BOLD MOVEMENTS OF THE ENEMY — BRITISH MEN-OF-WAR UP HUDSON'S RIVER — TORY INSURRECTIONS PREVENTED — EXCITEMENT ABOVE THE HIGHLANDS — ACTION OF THE NEW YORK COMMITTEE OF SAFETY — RELIANCE UPON GENERAL LEE — GLOOMY FOREBODINGS OF THE PATRIOTS — THE BRITISH ON THE EAST RIVER — THEY LAND IN WESTCHESTER — OPPOSITION OF THE AMERICANS — HOWE AT NEW ROCHELLE — ARRIVAL OF GENERAL LEE — HIS GREAT POPULARITY — COUNCIL-OF-WAR — YORK ISLAND ABANDONED, EXCEPT FORT WASHINGTON — MOVEMENTS OF THE BELLIGERENTS IN WESTCHESTER — AN ALARM AND ITS CAUSE — HOSTILE DISPOSITIONS NEAR WHITE PLAINS — A CONFLICT THERE.

WASHINGTON was again sorely perplexed by the movements, or rather the apparent apathy of the enemy. Sometimes he conjectured that an invasion of the Jerseys was contemplated by Howe; and Greene, who had lately been promoted to major-general, was sent to take post, with a respectable force, at Fort Constitution, upon the Palisades, nearly opposite Fort Washington, with directions to shift his quarters to Bergen or Baskingridge, as occasion might require. "Possibly," said Washington, "he [Howe] may bend his course toward Philadelphia," for two thousand men were sufficient, with the ships, to hold New York; and he ordered General Mercer, of the flying camp, to keep a vigilant watch over West Jersey, and station videttes upon the Neversink hills at Sandy Hook, to give immediate information if any of the British ships should put to sea. Again, it was thought that a southern winter campaign might be in contemplation. These suggestions naturally occupied the mind of the commander-in-chief, for why should that large British army, numerous, well-equipped, flushed with recent victory, and holding an advantageous position, lay in supineness,

apparently wasting precious time, and losing golden opportunities for striking successful blows?

But General Howe was not idle. He was cautious, slow, and humane, and he preferred to gain bloodless victories, if possible, by the force of overawing numbers. For the two or three weeks that he seemed to be inactive, he was diligently recruiting his army, by mustering into the service the swarms of tories in and around New York, who had been made hopeful by the course of current events. Oliver Delancy, of Westchester (a member of a prominent Huguenot family), who had been recently commissioned a brigadier by Howe, was one of the most active and efficient of the loyalists in this business, and he found tories in abundance in his own county. Major Rogers, the famous ranger of the French and Indian war, who, as we have seen, was in the market at the commencement of hostilities, offering his services to the highest bidder, had broken his solemn parole given to the Congress, received a colonel's commission from General Howe, and was very active on Long Island, embodying the tories into a corps called the Queen's rangers. These were afterward commanded, with great skill and effect, by Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe. Through these and other instrumentalities, the loyalist strength was daily developed, and added much to the power of the invading army.

The enemy finally made unmistakable movements toward gaining Washington's rear. On the ninth of October the British frigates *Roebuck*, *Phœnix*, and *Tartar*, under Captain Hyde Parker, which had been lying opposite Bloomingdale, in Hudson's river, proceeded to Tarrytown, with their tenders, for the purpose of giving aid and encouragement to the Westchester loyalists. Strange as it may appear, Putnam's obstructions at Fort Washington were not yet completed, and those hindrances there, on which so much reliance had been placed, were of no avail, notwithstanding they were guarded by four armed galleys, a sloop with one of Bushnell's "Marine Turtles" on board, and batteries upon each shore. The hostile vessels, spreading their canvass to a gentle southern breeze, passed them as if they were only bending reeds, not, however,

without suffering much in their masts and rigging by American cannon-balls. They returned the fire, drove the galleys before them, and sent Bushnell's infernal machine to the bottom of the river.

But the chief errand of these vessels was unsuccessful, for American patrols effectually checked the insurrectionary spirit of the Westchester tories along the Hudson. An intense but salutary excitement was produced among all classes, both below and above the Highlands. It brought every friend of his country to his feet and his musket to his shoulder. The New York committee of safety, with Peter R. Livingston at their head, then sitting at Fishkill, in Duchess county, were startled into the most efficient action; and, at the request of Washington, they despatched couriers with words of alarm to General Schuyler, in the north, General James Clinton, in the Highlands, and to the commanders of the militia in the neighboring Connecticut counties of Litchfield and Fairfield. Disaffection and drafts for the army had so much weakened the material strength of the republicans above the Highlands, that the chances and dangers of tory insurrections were greatly increased. "Nothing," wrote the committee to Washington, "can be more alarming than the present situation of our state. We are daily getting the most authentic intelligence, of bodies of men enlisted and armed in order to assist the enemy. We much fear that these, co-operating with the enemy, may seize such passes as will cut off the communication between the army and us, and prevent your supplies. We dare not trust any more of the militia out of this county, but beg leave to suggest to your excellency the propriety of sending a body of men to the Highlands or Peekskill, to secure the passes, prevent insurrections, and overawe the disaffected."*

General Lincoln was immediately ordered up to the Highlands, with a part of the Massachusetts militia, and Colonel Tash, then on his way to camp from Hartford, with New Hampshire militia, was directed to proceed with all possible celerity, to Fishkill, and place himself under the control of the committee of safety, to suppress insurrection. James Clinton, lately promoted to brigadier-general,

* Journal of the Committee of Safety, October 10, 1776.

was in command in the Highlands, and a French engineer was sent up to strengthen the fortifications there.

To the apprehension of most men, the whole country below the Highlands appeared to be in imminent peril from the combined forces of invasion and insurrection, and aid of every kind was earnestly sought. General Lee was hourly expected from the south, "as if from Heaven, with a legion of flaming swordsmen," and many men, more anxious than wise, regarded his coming as a sure hope of deliverance. "If he is in Philadelphia," wrote John Jay to Edward Rutledge, "pray hasten his departure—he is much needed in New York. I wish our army well stationed in the Highlands, and all the lower country desolated."—"My most sanguine views," wrote Colonel Reed to his wife, "do not extend further than keeping our ground here till this campaign closes;" and the general belief was, that the republican army must retreat up the Hudson or be lost. Washington participated in these apprehensions, but was continually calm and hopeful.*

While these movements were in progress on Hudson's river, General Howe was making more important advances on the East river. Leaving a sufficient number of British and Hessian troops, to keep the city, and others to man their lines near Harlem, he proceeded with the remainder of his army, in ninety flat-boats, sloops, and schooners, on the morning of the twelfth of October, under cover of a heavy fog, through the narrow channel of Hell-Gate, and landed upon Throck's Neck,† a low peninsula

* This was a most critical moment in our history. The most sanguine and hopeful began to doubt, and the most energetic began to grow weary, for every element of successful warfare against the power of Great Britain appeared to be growing weaker every day. "My idea is shortly this," wrote Colonel Reed to his wife on the eleventh of October, "that if France or some other foreign power does not interfere, or some feuds arise among the enemy's troops, we shall not be able to stand them next spring." The Congress, at this time, began to be weakened by doubters, and the faith of all was sorely tried. "From what I can learn," said Reed in the same letter, "there is a considerable party in Philadelphia for absolute and unconditional submission. Jemmy Allen was here the other day, with a view to discover, I suppose, what prospects *we* had, so that the party might take their measures accordingly. I fancy things did not please him, as a person must be in the secret to know the worst of our affairs." From this time, faction, the bane of all good efforts, was conspicuous in the continental Congress, and at times imperilled the cause.

† This has been written Frog's, Throg's, and Throgg's, by both early and late writers. Throck's is correct. A man named Throckmorton owned the neck. He was familiarly called Throck, and hence the title of his little domain.

stretching into the East river from the Westchester main. A few days afterward other troops from Montressor's island and Flushing landed there; and, on the twenty-second, General Knyphausen, with the second division of the German hirelings, just arrived at New York, landed upon the present Davenport's Neck, near New Rochelle.

As soon as Washington was advised of this movement, he directed General Heath to employ his own brigade and some militia near Kingsbridge, in opposing the landing of the British upon the main, and in occupying lower Westchester. A redoubt had been thrown up near Williams Bridge; all the passes to Kingsbridge were well guarded, and a detachment was employed in casting up intrenchments at White Plains. The causeway to Throck's and Pell's necks were closely guarded, and on the night after the landing of the British, the bridge connecting the former with the main was removed by Hand's riflemen, and the enemy were left upon an island. In front lay Colonel Prescott, whom Howe had met in battle on Bunker's hill, and he and Hand, with their respective regiments, and Lieutenant Bryant, with a three-pound cannon, confined the invaders upon that narrow domain for almost a week. They then crossed in boats to Pell's Neck, a short distance above, and proceeded to march over Pelham manor, toward New Rochelle, when they were confronted by Glover and his brigade. After a hot skirmish, the Americans were repulsed, and Howe encamped near Hutchinson's river. On the twenty-first he took post on the heights of New Rochelle, where he was joined by Knyphausen and his Germans the next day.

Washington, meanwhile, had personally inspected the ground of operations, and reconnoitred the enemy. He was well pleased with all that Heath and his troops had done; and after ordering some additional fortifications, he returned to camp, where he found General Lee, who had arrived on the fourteenth. He was warmly welcomed by the commander-in-chief, who had a high opinion of Lee's military knowledge, and to that officer was immediately assigned the command of all the troops above Kingsbridge. Great

deference was paid to Lee's opinions on military affairs by every officer; and the whole army, having a vague notion of his superior genius, almost idolized him. The success of the republicans at Charleston (in which, as we have seen, Lee had but little personal concern, and for which he deserved no special praise); the honors paid him by Congress while he was in Philadelphia, and the plaudits of the army on his arrival, intensified his pride and egotism, and with corresponding language he spoke disparagingly of the Congress, the military commanders, and the people at large, whenever he felt like giving vent to his censorious spirit. In a letter to the Congress on the twelfth of October, he said: "For Heaven's sake, arouse yourselves." To John Adams he wrote, that the failure of the campaign could not be charged upon the army, but chiefly upon "your highmightinesses!"—the members of Congress. To General Gates he wrote, on the fourteenth of October: "Congress seems to stumble at every step. I have been very free in delivering my opinion to them. General Washington is much to blame in not menacing them with resignation, unless they refrain from unhinging the army by their absurd interference." His impertinent strictures and flippant assertions, were regarded by the masses as evidences of superior wisdom; and, at the time in question, General Lee was undoubtedly the most popular man on the continent. How little he was entitled to that respect subsequent events proved; but that confidence of the army and people, at a moment so critical, was useful as a powerful stimulous to action, and good results followed.

Washington called a council-of-war at Lee's quarters, on the sixteenth of October,* when it was resolved that the army should retreat into Westchester, leaving behind a sufficient garrison to defend Fort Washington and its dependences. That garrison, consisting chiefly of Pennsylvania troops, was placed under the command of Colonel Magaw, who was solemnly charged by Washington

* The council consisted of the commander-in-chief, Major-Generals Lee, Putnam, Heath, Spencer, and Sullivan (the latter having been recently exchanged for General Prescott); Brigadier-Generals Lord Stirling (lately exchanged) Mifflin, M'Dougall, Parsons, Nixon, Wadsworth, Scott, Fellows, Clinton, and Lincoln; and Colonel Knox, of the artillery. General George Clinton was the only member of the council who opposed evacuation.

to defend the fortress to the last extremity. Greene was continued in command of Fort Constitution (then named Fort Lee, in honor of the general), on the Jersey shore, nearly opposite; and the remainder of the army, arranged in four divisions, under Generals Lee, Heath, Sullivan, and Lincoln, speedily withdrew to Westchester across Kingsbridge, moved slowly up the western side of the Bronx river to confront the equally slow moving enemy on the other side of that stream, and formed a series of intrenched camps upon the hills, from the heights of Fordham to the White Plains, a distance of about thirteen miles.

Washington continued his headquarters on Harlem heights until the twenty-first, when he removed to Valentine's hill, eastward of Yonkers, and on the twenty-third, established himself a little beyond the scattering village of White Plains, on the road toward North Castle. All that time he was continually in the saddle by day, and at his desk late at night, laboring incessantly in efforts to stop or drive back the invaders. He personally examined the whole rough country in that region, and resolving to establish a fortified camp on the hills of North Castle, he commenced the erection of breastworks, under the direction of a French engineer, between his quarters and White Plains village, rather as a defence for his camp, two miles beyond, than as a line of permanent fortifications.

On the twenty-seventh of October, both armies were in full force near the White Plains. The Americans had been arriving there by detachments since the twenty-first. Meanwhile several spirited side movements, and an important rear one had taken place between the belligerents. One of the former was an attack made on the night of the twenty-first, by Colonel Haslet, at the head of seven hundred and fifty Delaware troops, upon the rangers of the notorious Rogers, then lying at Mamaroneck, on Long Island sound. Haslet crossed the British line of march undiscovered, fell upon the rangers at midnight, killed and captured between seventy and eighty of them, and carried off sixty stand of arms, with provision and clothing. Rogers skulked away in the dark, after the first fire,

and escaped. Two days afterward, Colonel Hand and his riflemen attacked two hundred and forty Hessian chasseurs near Eastchester and routed them; almost nightly the British pickets were disturbed by the Americans. These events made Howe cautious and slow in his movements.

The twenty-seventh of October was Sunday. The autumn had been mild and pleasant, and many of the trees were yet radiant with their gorgeous foliage. Washington was about to mount his horse, for his usual tour of inspection through the camp, when the boom of heavy cannon in the direction of Kingsbridge, fell upon his ear. It gave him great anxiety, for his baggage, stores, and cannon were yet behind, in charge of General Lee, their removal being very tardy, because of a lack of wagons and horses. Scouts were instantly sent in that direction, and the intelligence which they brought was satisfactory. The enemy below, hoping to alarm the American army in Westchester, and draw off a portion of it, so as to give Howe greater promises of success in falling upon Washington's camp, had made a feigned attack upon Magaw on Harlem heights, by land and water. But they were so warmly received by the garrisons of Fort Washington and Fort Lee, that they retired in haste, and many of them, under Earl Percy, speedily joined Howe, in Westchester.

General Lee, meanwhile, leading the rear division of the American forces, eight thousand strong, with the baggage and artillery, was on his way through Westchester to join the army. He was all night upon the road, and entered the camp at White Plains on the morning of the twenty-eighth, whither Washington had called all his troops from the heights along the Bronx, satisfied that Howe meditated a general engagement. The enemy had then been lying at Scarsdale, not far from the White Plains, for three days.

Washington's camp, intended to be temporary, was situated upon high ground, fronting eastward, and overlooking the small rolling valley and the village of White Plains. Its right wing rested on the Bronx river (an inconsiderable stream), its left on a small, deep lake in the forest, now called Willet's pond, and in front were quite

strong intrenchments. Beyond the right was a marsh through which the Bronx flowed, and rising from its western border is Chatterton's hill, quite a lofty eminence that presents an abrupt rocky front to the stream. On the summit of this hill Washington stationed Colonel Rufus Putnam, with a militia regiment, charged with the duty of casting up some intrenchments there.

On the morning of the twenty-eighth, the commander-in-chief, with several of his general officers, rode to the summit of Chatterton's hill to reconnoitre. Lee pointed to another still higher hill on the north, and said: "Yonder is the ground we ought to occupy."—"Let us then go and view it," Washington replied. While on their way a light-horseman came toward them in hot haste, shouting —"The British are on the camp, sir!"—"Then, gentlemen," said the chief, coolly, "we have other business to attend to besides reconnoitring," and putting his horse into a swift gallop, hastened to the camp, followed by his officers. There he learned, from Adjutant-General Reed, that the enemy were approaching in great force, that all the picket guards had been driven in, but that the whole American army were at their respective posts, ready for battle. With all the calmness of perfect security and composure, Washington remarked: "Gentlemen, you will retire to your respective posts, and do the best you can."*

General Howe had put his army in motion quite early on the morning of the twenty-eighth, and in two columns it marched directly toward the American lines. His right wing, composed chiefly of British troops, was commanded by Sir Henry Clinton; and his left, consisting principally of Germans, was led by the veteran De Heister. General Howe accompanied this division, and it was its advanced guard, consisting of light infantry and chasseurs, that drove in the American pickets, and caused the alarm that brought Washington and his officers back to the camp.

Satisfied that the enemy would attempt to get possession of Chatterton's hill, Washington at once detached Colonel Haslet, with his Delaware troops, to reinforce Putnam's militia; and soon

* Heath's Memoir, p. 77.

afterward, General Alexander M'Dougall was ordered to the same position, with his brigade, which consisted of Maryland, Connecticut, and Massachusetts regiments, under the respective commands of Colonels Smallwood, Webb, and Brooks, and portions of two New York regiments, under Colonel Ritzema.* With the latter was a small artillery corps, with two field-pieces, under Captain Alexander Hamilton. M'Dougall was directed to take the general command of all the forces upon Chatterton's hill, which then consisted of not more than sixteen hundred men.

Before M'Dougall's arrival upon the hill the battle had commenced. General Spencer had gone out with two thousand New England troops to oppose the advanced guard of the enemy's left. He had given the Hessians a full volley of musketry, which threw them into temporary disorder, while his own troops, apparently frightened by their own performance, turned and fled precipitately to the Greenburg hills, closely pursued by a corps of Hessians, under Colonel Ralle.† It was at the moment of this retreat that Colonel Haslet reached the hill and received quite a severe cannonade from the approaching enemy. One of Colonel Putnam's militia was wounded in the thigh by a cannon-ball. This accident so alarmed his companions, that the whole regiment "broke and fled immediately, and were not rallied without much difficulty."‡

General M'Dougall reached the hill soon after this flight, and just as the main body of the enemy entered the plain. Perceiving the advantageous position of the Americans, and ignorant of their numerical strength, the cautious Howe ordered a general halt. With his officers in their saddles, he held a council-of-war in full view of the Americans, and it was at once perceived that his plan of operations was changed. Instead of proceeding to charge

* Rudolph Ritzema was made colonel of one of the four New York regiments organized in that city in the spring of 1775. He was with Montgomery on Lake Champlain and the Sorel the following autumn. After the battle at the White Plains he became dissatisfied, and joined the royal army. At nearly the same time, Herman Zedwitz, a Prussian, who was M'Dougall's first major, and became a lieutenant-colonel, was cashiered for attempting a treasonable correspondence with Governor Tryon.

† Dawson's Battles of the United States, i., 178.

‡ Colonel Haslet to Cæsar Rodney. American Archives, fifth series, 653.

directly upon the American lines, he took measures to drive M'Dougall from his strong position. Nearly twenty field-pieces were brought forward to cover an attack in that quarter; and a battalion of Hessians were ordered across the Bronx at the foot of the declivity, to charge directly upon the republicans. These were supported by a brigade of grenadiers, under Count Donop; and a brigade of British troops, under General Leslie, composed in part of two hundred and fifty cavalry. Ralle, who, after relinquishing his pursuit of Spencer's troops, had taken post upon an eminence southward of Chatterton's hill, was ordered to charge M'Dougall's right, at the same time.

At a little past meridian, Howe's field-pieces began to play upon the Americans on the hill, and the Hessians advanced to the eastern bank of the Bronx. The stream was so swollen by recent rains, and its bed was so filled with drift, that the Germans refused to ford it, and a rude bridge was hastily constructed. Observing this movement, M'Dougall ordered Ritzema and Smallwood forward to oppose it, and Hamilton was directed to bring his field-pieces into play. He descended the hill to a rocky ledge which commanded the bridge, where, almost concealed from the enemy, he opened a destructive fire upon them. The Hessians recoiled in great confusion, fell back to the artillery, and then joined the division under Leslie in fording the river a quarter of a mile below. Marching up the stream toward the foot of Chatterton's hill, the enemy ascended its slopes, and ravines, and steep, rocky front, galled by Hamilton's field-pieces, and the muskets of Smallwood and Ritzema, as the latter slowly fell back toward the crown of the eminence. At length the British cavalry attacked the militia under Colonel Brooks, stationed behind a stone wall, and dispersed them, and strong endeavors were made to turn M'Dougall's right flank. For an hour that gallant officer, with only six hundred men, consisting chiefly of his own brigade and Haslet's corps, sustained a conflict.

Twice the British light troops and cavalry were repulsed, when an attack upon his flank by Colonel Ralle, compelled M'Dougall to give way and retreat to the intrenchments at White Plains. This

was done in good order down the southeastern side of Chatterton's hill, and across the Bronx, near the present railway station, under cover of some troops led by General Putnam, who were going out to reinforce them. M'Dougall carried off his wounded and artillery, and left the victors in possession of only the inconsiderable breastworks upon the hill. The militia, who had been scattered among the Greenburg hills, were collected within the camp that night, and there the American army rested, almost undisturbed, for two or three days, though in continual expectation of another attack from the enemy. "They are now close at hand," wrote Mr. Harrison, Washington's secretary, the next morning, "and most probably will, in a little time, commence their second attack; we expect it every hour; perhaps it is beginning; I have just heard the report of some cannon." It was a false alarm.

The exact loss sustained by the belligerents in this action is not known. That of the Americans did not exceed, probably, three hundred men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; while that of the British was about the same. General Howe, in his report to the ministry on the thirtieth of November, made the computed loss of the Americans even less. Rumor gave the number, he said, at not less than two hundred and fifty.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A NIGHT OF ANXIETY — MOVEMENTS OF THE AMERICAN ARMY — HOWE'S FEAR OF THEIR INTRENCHMENTS — THE REAL WEAKNESS OF THE AMERICAN WORKS — SUFFERING CONDITION OF THE REPUBLICAN TROOPS — RETREAT OF THE AMERICANS — RETREAT OF THE BRITISH — WASHINGTON'S PERPLEXITY — A COUNCIL-OF-WAR — NEW JERSEY AND THE HUDSON HIGHLANDS TO BE DEFENDED — DIVISIONS UNDER LEE AND HEATH — WASHINGTON AT THE HIGHLANDS — INSPECTION OF THE FORTS AND PASSES — CONTINENTAL VILLAGE — WASHINGTON AT FORT LEE — EVIDENT PERILS OF FORT WASHINGTON — THE JUDGMENT OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OVERRULED — FORT WASHINGTON INVESTED BY THE BRITISH — THE SIEGE, SURRENDER, AND RESULT.

THE night of the twenty-eighth of October was one of deep anxiety to Washington. Before his half-dispirited army was a powerful and elated enemy, active in preparations for another attack. He had taken possession of the most important point held by the Americans, and before sunset had so extended his right wing as to form a semicircle, with the evident intention of outflanking the republican camp, and gaining its rear.

That a severe struggle must be commenced at dawn appeared inevitable, and Washington employed every moment in removing his sick and stores further up the country. His right wing was removed to stronger ground, while the remainder of his troops were employed in strengthening his intrenchments and casting up redoubts. This labor was performed secretly during the darkness of a cold autumnal night, while the watch-fires of the enemy gleamed upon the hills, the slopes, and the plain in front, appearing "to the eye to mix with the stars."* There stood those lines of breastworks in the morning, seeming like the creations of miracle or magic, to the eye of Howe, and reminding him, no doubt, of similar apparitions

* Heath.

on Bunker's Hill and Dorchester Height, which preceded disasters to his arms a few months before.

Howe was amazed by the apparent strength of Washington's defences, as he gazed at them through his telescope on the morning of the twenty-ninth. He little thought that they were composed chiefly of earth and sods, piled upon cornstalks, which a cannon-ball might scatter like chaff. To him their height and apparent solidity made them seem almost impregnable, and he postponed the meditated attack. He sent an express with orders for Earl Percy to hasten on with reinforcements; and he proceeded to cast up intrenchments and redoubts in front of the American camp. Washington, meanwhile, was keeping a sleepless watch over the movements of his enemy, and every detachment sent out by Howe to reconnoitre or attack, were promptly confronted by the republican troops.

Earl Percy joined Howe on the evening of the thirtieth, and immediate preparations were commenced for an attack upon Washington the next morning. A tempest of wind and rain arose at midnight, and continued about twenty-four hours, delaying all military operations. During this time the Americans suffered dreadfully for want of proper clothing and shelter. "The rebel army," wrote a British officer to a friend in London, "are in so wretched a condition as to clothing and accoutrements, that I believe no nation ever saw such a set of tatterdemalions. There are few coats among them but what are out at elbows, and in a whole regiment, there is scarce a pair of breeches. Judge, then, how they must be pinched by a winter's campaign. We who are warmly clothed and well equipped, already feel it severely; for it is even now much colder than I ever felt in England. As to provisions, they have been pretty well supplied; more care has been taken of their bellies than their backs."*—"A most horrid night it was to lay cold in the trenches," wrote General George Clinton. "Uncovered as we are, daily on fatigue, making redoubts, flèches, abatis, and retreating from them, and the little temporary huts made for our comfort,

* October 30, 1776. American Archives, Fifth Series, ii., 1293.

before they are well finished, I fear will ultimately destroy our army without fighting."*

The brave and honest Clinton could not comprehend the continual strategetic maneuvres which Washington was compelled to make, for he felt that war consisted chiefly in genuine fighting. Yet he was too modest and patriotic to condemn these measures. "They may be right for aught I know," he said: "I don't understand much the refined art of war; it is said to consist in stratagem and deception." But the accomplished Tench Tilghman, one of Washington's aids, fairly estimated the value of the system pursued by the commander-in-chief. "The campaign hitherto," he wrote, "has been a fair trial of generalship, in which, I flatter myself, we have had the advantage. If we, with our motley army, can keep Mr. Howe and his grand appointment at bay, I think we shall make no contemptible military figure."†

The wind and rain ceased in the evening of the thirty-first, and that night, while the storm-clouds were breaking and the British hosts were slumbering, Washington set fire to the barns and outhouses containing forage and stores which he could not remove, and, leaving a strong rearguard upon the camp-ground, withdrew to the heights of North Castle, toward the Croton river, five miles distant, where he immediately cast up strong intrenchments, with the intention of making a bold stand there if the enemy should advance. The cautious Howe was afraid to attack him there, but was about to assail the rearguard of the Americans, when the rain began to fall heavily again, and for two or three days he was compelled to remain almost inactive. There was some slight skirmishing between pickets, but nothing of importance occurred.

Finally, on the night of the fourth of November, Howe retreated toward the Hudson and Harlem rivers, and his army took post in detachments at different places from Dobb's Ferry to Valentine's hill. On the twelfth, his whole army, in two columns, marched toward Kingsbridge, and encamped on the heights of Fordham;

* Clinton to John M'Kesson, October 31, American Archives, Fifth Series, ii., 1312.
† Tilghman to William Duer, October 31, 1776. Ibid. ii., 1311.

their line extending from the Bronx, on the east, almost to the Hudson on the west.

Meanwhile, Washington was somewhat perplexed. He at first suspected Howe's retreat to be a feint to entice him from his strong position upon the heights of North Castle, for it was evident that the royalists had abandoned the idea of attacking the republicans there. Events soon solved the difficulties in his mind. He had already received intelligence from Greene, that the enemy had taken possession of Fort Independence, near Kingsbridge; and an attack upon Fort Washington and an invasion of New Jersey, seemed probable, for he could not believe that General Howe, supposing he was actually retreating to New York, meant to close the campaign, and to sit down without attempting some new enterprise.*

Under these impressions the commander-in-chief called a council-of-war on the sixth of November,† when it was resolved to take measures for the defence of New Jersey and the Hudson Highlands. Washington immediately ordered Lord Stirling, with five thousand troops belonging to states westward of Hudson's river, to cross it at King's ferry (Stony Point), because British vessels obstructed all passages below. The remainder of the army, composed of New York and New England troops, were separated into two divisions, for service elsewhere. One of these was placed under the command of the brave and skillful General Heath, then in the prime of young manhood, who was ordered to repair to the Highlands, and guard the forts and passes on each side of the river

* The commander-in-chief was much annoyed at this time by the conduct of his troops. Some of them were straggling about the country, at a time when an attack from the enemy was hourly expected. Others were plundering the inhabitants in the neighborhood of the camp, in which business some officers were actually engaged. His orders from the first to the sixth of November, indicate the existence of great irregularities. On the night of the fifth of November, the White Plains courthouse, Presbyterian church, and several private dwellings, were burnt by a drunken American officer, of the Massachusetts line. This conduct Washington severely censured in general orders the next day, in which the perpetrators were spoken of as "base and cowardly wretches," and the army was assured that they should be brought to justice, and meet with the punishment they deserved. This incendiarism has been confounded with the destruction of barns and forage by order of Washington, and made the theme of severe comments upon the Americans.

† The council was composed of his excellency, the commander-in-chief; Major-Generals Lee, Putnam, Spencer, Heath, Sullivan, and Lincoln; and Brigadier-Generals Lord Stirling, Mifflin, Nixon, M'Dougall, Parsons, Scott, and Clinton.

there. The other division, about four thousand strong, was intrusted to General Lee, to whom Washington gave discretionary instructions to remain in the vicinity of North Castle in a position secure from surprise, or to follow his chief into New Jersey, as circumstances might require. Knowing Lee's ambition and impetuosity, he specially recommended him, in the deferential form of suggestion, to retire toward the Highlands rather than "run the hazard of an attack with unequal numbers," and concluded by saying: "If the enemy should remove the whole, or the greater part of their force to the west side of Hudson's river, I have no doubt of your following, with all possible despatch, leaving the militia and invalids to cover the frontiers of Connecticut in case of need." How these expectations concerning Lee were disappointed, we shall soon observe.

Having completed these arrangements, Washington left North Castle on the tenth, and arrived at Peekskill at sunset the same day, where he met Generals Heath and Stirling. The latter had just effected the passage of the Maryland and Virginia troops at King's ferry, and had sent forward a scout to clear the way through the mountain passes of Rockland to the more level country of New Jersey. Meanwhile, the commander-in-chief had apprized Governor Livingston of that state, of the movements of the two armies, recommended him to have his militia put on the best possible footing, and advised him to urge the inhabitants living near the water, to prepare for removing their stock, grain, effects, and carriages, upon the earliest notice. "If they are not so," he said, "the calamities which they will suffer will be beyond all description, and the advantages derived by the enemy immensely great. They treated all here without discrimination; the distinction of whig and tory has been lost in one general scene of ravage and desolation."

Washington was now at the southern entrance to the Highlands, for the first time in his life, and was deeply impressed with the grandeur of the scenery, and the eligibility of many points for the erection of almost invulnerable military works. With Generals

Heath, Stirling, Mifflin, the brothers Clinton and others, he visited the Highland forts, in boats, on the eleventh, made many valuable observations and suggestions, and urged the necessity of completing and strengthening Fort Montgomery as speedily as possible. Early the next morning he went out with General Heath to reconnoitre the eastern side of the river, from Peekskill to the mountains; and near the southern gorge of the Highlands, through which troops might pass, he selected the site for a military station, which afterward became an important depot for stores, known as Continental Village.

On the morning of the twelfth, Washington formally invested Heath with the general command in the Highlands, and furnished him with explicit instructions. He also wrote to General Lee, urging him to remove his military stores to some place of safety above the Croton river; and then, full of anxiety about Fort Washington, he crossed the Hudson, and, accompanied by Colonel Reed, took the most direct route for Fort Lee, while the forces under Lord Stirling made their way more slowly through the mountain passes further inland. These assembled at Hackensack, in the rear of Fort Lee, after a circuitous route from North Castle of more than sixty miles.

Fort Washington was now in peril. This fact was clear to the mind of the commander-in-chief, on his arrival at Fort Lee on the thirteenth of November, although the general movements and designs of the enemy were yet mysterious. Knyphausen, at the head of six German battalions, had crossed the Harlem river on the second, driven the Americans from their fortifications near Kingsbridge, taken possession of them, and encamped on the plain between the river and Mount Washington. The Americans had fled from these posts to Fort Washington; and the whole country beyond the Harlem, from Morrisania to Dobbs' Ferry, was in possession of the enemy, early in the first week in November. On the fifth, three ships-of-war, laden with supplies for the British army, had passed up the Hudson almost unharmed, and convinced the most hopeful that the obstructions in the river were absolutely valueless

When Washington was informed of these facts, he foresaw the dangers that threatened the garrison under Magaw. At the same time the enemy were making movements at Dobbs' Ferry, indicative of an intention to invade the Jerseys. He wrote to Greene on the morning of the eighth, and after deploring the inefficiency of the river obstructions, he said: "If we can not prevent vessels from passing up, and the enemy are possessed of the surrounding country, what valuable purpose can it answer to attempt to hold a post from which the expected benefit can not be had. I am, therefore, inclined to think, that it will not be prudent to hazard the men and stores at Mount Washington; but as you are on the spot, I leave it to you to give such orders, as to evacuating Mount Washington, as you may judge best, and so far revoking the order given to Colonel Magaw to defend it to the last."

Greene felt too sanguine of success to think of withdrawing the garrison from Fort Washington, and abandoning such a strong post to the enemy without a struggle. He knew its inherent strength, the advantageous position of its ravelins and supporting redoubts, and the capacity of the garrison to withstand assailants in number double their own. Magaw did not apprehend any immediate danger, and believed that it would take the enemy several weeks to carry the fort by siege, while its relative situation to the river was such, that a withdrawal of the garrison, at any moment, appeared to be an easy undertaking. These considerations, and the important fact that the fort obstructed free communication of the enemy between the city and country, satisfied Greene that the fortress ought to be held until the last moment. He communicated his views to Washington on the ninth, and soon afterward sent over the regiment of Colonel Rawlings and a part of Colonel Durkee's command, to reinforce the garrison, making the number of troops there more than two thousand. These, however, were chiefly militia, some of them recently enlisted. Upon these too much reliance was placed, as the sequel will show.

Greene was still sanguine of success when Washington arrived, but the latter, well knowing the little dependence to be placed

upon militia in the hour of trial, expressed his regret, and would have ordered the instant evacuation of the fortress, had not the latter strenuously opposed the measure as peculiarly dangerous, arguing, justly, that Fort Lee must also be abandoned, and thus the Hudson be left open for the British vessels to go up without hindrance, with supplies of men and food for the enemy. Washington hesitated, and in that hesitation lay a fatal error. For a moment he yielded his bright judgment to another whose forecast seldom erred, but in this case the result was direful. On that very night thirty flat-bottomed boats belonging to the British went silently up the Hudson, passed Fort Washington undiscovered, and made their way through Spyt den Duivel creek into Harlem river, to aid the enemy in crossing that stream.

On the fifteenth, a deserter from Fort Washington made his way into the British camp, and informed General Howe of the real condition of the garrison and the works on Harlem heights. Howe was agreeably surprised by the information, and immediately sent a messenger to Colonel Magaw, with a summons to surrender within an hour, intimating that a refusal might subject his garrison to massacre. Magaw promptly refused compliance, and sent a copy of his brief note to General Greene.* That officer forwarded it to Washington, at Hackensack, where Stirling's troops had encamped, and at the same time ordered over a part of Mercer's flying camp, to reinforce the garrison.

On the following morning, Howe opened a cannonade from two British redoubts on the high eastern shore of the Harlem river, just above the present High bridge, upon the American outworks opposite. This cannonade also served as a covering to troops which crossed the river at the same time; for Howe had arranged plans for making four simultaneous attacks. Knyphausen, with five hundred Hessians and Waldeckers, was to move from Kings-

* In his note to Howe, after repeating the substance of that general's threat, he said: "I rather think it a mistake than a settled resolution in General Howe, to act a part so unworthy of himself and the British nation." He added: "But give me leave to assure his excellency that, actuated by the most glorious cause that mankind ever fought in, I am determined to defend this post to the very last extremity."

bridge to the attack on the north, simultaneously with a division of English and Hessian troops, sixteen hundred strong, under Lord Percy, who were to assail the lines on the south. At the same time, Brigadier-General Mathews, supported by Cornwallis with light-infantry and grenadiers, was to cross the Harlem river with guards and light-infantry, in flatboats, under cover of the guns on the Westchester hills, just mentioned; while Colonel Stirling, with the forty-second regiment, was to drop down the Harlem river in batteaux, to the left of the American lines facing New York, as a feint to distract the attention of the republicans.

Expecting such an attack, Colonel Magaw made a judicious disposition of his forces, now almost three thousand strong. Colonel Rawlings, with his Maryland riflemen, was posted behind a three-gun battery on the north, called Fort Tryon, and a few men were stationed in another redoubt, still further north, called Cock-hill fort. Militia from Mercer's flying-camp were placed upon the rough wooded hills eastward of Mount Washington, under Colonel Baxter, whose chief defence was a small redoubt called Fort George; and eight hundred Pennsylvanians, under Colonel Lambert Cadwalader, manned the lines in the direction of New York. Colonel Magaw commanded in Fort Washington.

Howe's plans were well carried out. At ten o'clock his cannonade had commenced, and all his troops destined for the fray were in motion. Knyphausen's division advanced in two columns, one led by himself, and the other by Colonel Ralle. The latter drove the Americans from Cock-hill fort, while Knyphausen, in the face of many obstructions, clambered up the heights and attacked Rawlings in Fort Tryon. There many Hessians were slain, but Rawlings was finally compelled to yield and flee to Fort Washington, under cover of its guns. A moment afterward, and the white Hessian flag was waving over Fort Tryon.

Lord Percy, meanwhile, had crossed near Harlem, swept over the plain, driven in the American pickets at Harlem cove (Manhattanville), and attacked a detachment of Cadwalader's troops at the outward line of intenchments on the heights. Percy's advance

force was eight hundred strong, while Cadwalader, at that point, had only one hundred and fifty men, and one eighteen-pounder. Yet the enemy were repulsed, and Percy withdrew behind a wood toward the American left, when the conflict ceased for a time.

While these events were transpiring on the extreme boundaries of the field of operations, Mathews and Stirling had landed. The former pushed up the wooded declivity in the face of Baxter's fire, and after a short contest, drove the Americans from Fort George, and stood victorious upon the hills overlooking the open fields around Fort Washington. Baxter was killed by a British officer, while he was bravely encouraging his men; and his little force, that escaped, retreated to Fort Washington. Mathews pushed on with his guards and light-infantry, to cut off Cadwalader, and at the same time, Colonel Stirling made a feigned landing. He then dropped down to an estuary, and after loosing ninety men, killed and wounded in his boats, he landed at the foot of a precipice within the American lines. He then forced his way to the summit by a sinuous road, attacked a redoubt there, and made about two hundred Americans prisoners. Informed of his peril upon his flank, and again assailed by Percy in front, Cadwalader retreated along the road nearest the Hudson, closely pursued by the earl, with English and Hessian troops. With them he battled manfully all the way, and reached Fort Washington in safety, after losing many of his brave men by the cruel bayonet. Many of the German hirelings who pursued were left dead in the pathway of his flight.

The American outposts were now in possession of the enemy, and all the dependencies of Fort Washington were lost. At every point the defence had been gallant; but pike, ball, and bayonet, used by five thousand disciplined soldiers, overpowered the weakened patriots, and at a little past noon they were all gathered within and immediately around the citadel. Colonel Ralle now brought his column within one hundred yards of the fort, and from the shelter of a stone house, he sent in a second summons to Magaw, demanding an instant surrender.

The commander-in-chief, as we have seen, was at Hackensack

when intelligence of Howe's summons to Magaw reached him. He instantly mounted his horse and hastened to Fort Lee. It was dark when he arrived. Greene and Putnam had gone over to the besieged fortress, and he immediately followed, in a small boat. A new moon gave some light, and when partly across the river, he met and recognized those officers, who were returning. Greene assured him that the troops of the garrison were in high spirits, and would make a good defence, and persuaded him to return, as it was late in the evening. He yielded with reluctance. He felt impelled to inspect the whole ground personally, and a conviction that the retention of the fort was unwise still held possession of his mind. That night was one of great anxiety to him. He slept but little; and in the gray of dawn the next day, he was upon the summit of the Palisades with his telescope, making observations with eager vision

During the hours of conflict and maneuvre, when outpost after outpost fell, Washington stood there, surrounded by his officers, his great heart beating with fearful emotions, and listened to the roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry, and saw the white smoke curling above the trees along a line of almost three miles. Most of the battle was hidden from his view by the hills and forests; but with his glass he could distinctly see almost every movement of the gallant Cadwalader southward of the fort. It was a scene of awful interest to the chief; and when he saw the brave Pennsylvanian pursued by the Hessians, and his men prostrated and bayoneted by those bloody mercenaries while begging for quarter, it is said that he wept with the tenderness of a child.

It was now evident that the garrison could not hold out much longer. The enemy possessed redoubts from which, with bomb and ball, they might pour terrible destruction upon the fortress; and when Washington saw the flag go in from Colonel Ralle, he well knew its errand, and immediately sent a note* over to Magaw.

* This note was sent by Captain Gooch, of Boston, a brave and daring man, who, Heath says ("Memoir," p. 86), "offered to be the bearer of it."—"He ran down to the river," says Heath, "jumped into a small boat, pushed over the river, landed under the bank, ran up to the fort and

directing him to hold out till evening, when an effort would be made to bring off the garrison. It was too late. A panic had seized the militia, and they refused to man the lines. They were so thickly crowded in the fort that it was difficult for them to move; and utter confusion everywhere prevailed. Under these circumstances, with no further hope of successful resistance, Magaw had already entered upon negotiations for a capitulation. The enemy dictated the terms. The troops of the garrison were surrendered prisoners-of-war, and the fort and its dependencies, artillery and stores, were given to the victors unconditionally. The only terms granted to the prisoners were, that the private soldiers should retain their baggage, and the officers their swords. Before two o'clock on that sunny sixteenth of November, the red cross of St. George was waving over the strong fortress where the Union banner had been defiantly unfurled in the morning. More than two thousand men became prisoners;* and with these (who were marched to the city at midnight), and the captives taken on Long Island, the loathsome jails in New York, and more loathsome prison-hulks in the harbor, were soon glutted, and presented some of the most frightful aspects of the war. Heavy cannon and some of the finest small-arms possessed by the republicans, became spoil for the enemy, and the name of the fort was changed to Knyphausen, in honor of the Hessian leader. The fortress had been taken at a great cost of blood. The loss of the Americans, in killed and wounded, did not exceed one hundred, while that of the royal army, chiefly in Hessians, was almost one thousand.

The loss of Fort Washington distressed the commander-in-chief. "This is a most unfortunate affair," he said, in a letter to his brother on the nineteenth, "and has given me great mortification; as we have lost not only two thousand men that were there, but a good deal of artillery, and some of the best arms we had. And what

delivered the message; came out, ran and jumped over the broken ground, dodging the Hessians, some of whom struck at him with their pieces, and others attempted to thrust him with their bayonets; escaping through them, he got to his boat and returned to Fort Lee."

* General Howe, in his report to the ministry, computed the number of prisoners at 2,818, of whom 2,607 were privates.

adds to my mortification is, that this post, after the last ships went past it, was held contrary to my wishes and opinion, as I conceived it to be a hazardous one." Then alluding to the decision of a council of general officers, and the expressed desire of Congress that the post should be retained, he said: "I did not care to give an absolute order for withdrawing the garrison till I could get round and see the situation of things, and then it became too late, as the fort was invested. Upon the passing of the last ships I had given it as my opinion to General Greene, under whose care it was that it would be best to evacuate the place; but, as the order was discretionary, and his opinion differed from mine, it unhappily was delayed too long, to my great grief."

But Washington did not censure General Greene. There would have been injustice in so doing. He knew that the wisest often err, and that human judgment is imperfect at the best. And so strong was his faith in the genius of that, his favorite general, that he did not feel complimented by Lee, when he wrote, in allusion to the fall of Fort Washington: "O general, why would you be over-persuaded by men of inferior judgment to your own? It was a cursed affair." These were soft words to express the real feelings of Lee, for jealousy of, and disrespect for, the commander-in-chief were then powerful emotions of his soul, as a letter to a disloyal member of Washington's military family, written a few days afterward, fully certifies.

Here we will leave the contending armies on the Hudson, while we take a brief glance at military affairs in northern New York.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AFFAIRS IN THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT — CONSTRUCTION OF A BRITISH FLEET ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN — HOPES OF SIR GUY CARLETON — ARNOLD IN OPPOSITION — SEVERE NAVAL BATTLE NEAR VALCOUR'S ISLAND — CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES — ESCAPE OF THE AMERICANS IN THE NIGHT — A PURSUIT AND ATTACK — ANOTHER SEVERE NAVAL BATTLE — ESCAPE OF ARNOLD AND REMNANT OF HIS COMMAND — RETREAT OF AMERICANS TO TICONDEROGA — CARLETON AT CROWN POINT — HIS RETREAT TO CANADA — EVENTS IN NEW JERSEY — THE BRITISH CROSS HUDSON'S RIVER — FORT LEE ABANDONED — WASHINGTON'S RETREAT TOWARD THE DELAWARE CLOSELY PURSUED BY CORNWALLIS — DISOBEDIENT CONDUCT OF GENERAL LEE — HIS UNGENEROUS TREATMENT OF WASHINGTON — HEATH'S FIRMNESS — RETREAT TO BRUNSWICK — CRITICAL SITUATION OF THE AMERICAN ARMY — COLONEL REED'S UNFAITHFULNESS EXPOSED.

DURING the summer and autumn, affairs in the northern department had given Washington much uneasiness. A powerful enemy, with zeal quickened by the success of fellow-soldiers on the seaboard, was hovering upon the frontier, preparing to invade the regions of the Hudson. The opposing force was weak in numbers, defective in discipline, and, for a long time, was divided by sectional differences among the men, and jealousies among the officers. But in August, as we have observed, the future there appeared brighter for the republicans; and, by the advice of Washington, who had great confidence in the genius and courage of Arnold, Gates sent that officer down Lake Champlain in command of a flotilla, to confront the enemy at St. John.

Sir Guy Carleton was in chief command of the British army in the North, and he labored with great energy to construct a sufficient navy on the lake to drive the Americans from it. Soldiers and seamen, farmers and mechanics, all worked assiduously, and Sir Guy indulged the hope of reaching Albany, with a subjugating army, before the Christmas holydays. The great plan of the minis-

try would then be almost accomplished—the northern and southern states would be dissevered, and the rebellion would soon be brought to a close. So thought and hoped Sir Guy; but it was October before he had prepared a respectable armament, and all that was to be done must be done quickly, for the autumn storms would soon be abroad upon the lakes.

Arnold had gone down as far as the present Rouse's Point, but, ignorant of the strength of the enemy's fleet, and perceiving the wooded shores to be filling with British and Indians, he fell back; first to the Isle la Motte, and then to the narrow strait between Valcour's island and the New York main, where he anchored his flotilla.

On the morning of the eleventh of October, the British fleet, under Captain Pringle, appeared off Cumberland head. The schooner *Inflexible*, carrying eighteen twelve-pounders, was his flag-ship, and Sir Guy Carleton accompanied him, for he was eager to share in the honors of expected victory. The fleet bore up with a favorable breeze. It was formidable, for it was perfectly armed and equipped, was manned by seven hundred seamen, and the guns were worked by a detachment from the corps of British artillery at St. John. Among the naval officers was young Edward Pellew, afterward the great English admiral, Viscount Exmouth.

Arnold, undismayed by the formidable appearance of the enemy, prepared his weak and ill-provided flotilla for action. The *Congress* galley was his flag-ship. At noon the *Carleton* and the *Royal Savage*, and three galleys, commenced the battle; and at one o'clock the engagement was general. The *Congress* suffered much. She was hulled twelve times, received seven shots between wind and water, had her mainmast shattered in two places, her rigging cut in pieces, and many of her crew killed or wounded. As the battle thickened, Arnold's intrepidity increased. He pointed almost every gun with his own hands; and by voice and gesture he cheered on his men continually. He was nobly seconded by Brigadier-General Waterbury. The fight was a desperate one; sometimes almost hand to hand, for the channel was very narrow, and the vessels frequently

touched each other. And on Valcour's island were many British Indians, whose musketry, and whoops, and yells, added to the horrors of the scene. For six hours the battle lasted, and the enemy had gained the rear of the Americans. Then a moonless and cloudy night drew its black curtain over the bosom of the lake, a chilling north wind swept the smoke away from the place of conflict, and silence succeeded the sanguinary tumult. The palm of victory rested not with either party, but the Americans lost about sixty men, killed and wounded.

The two fleets anchored within a few hundred yards of each other. Carleton felt certain that he could seize his prey in the morning, and the little cabin of the *Inflexible* was a scene of much merriment until almost midnight. The Americans were more thoughtful and earnest, for they knew that great peril menaced them. Arnold called a council in the evening, and it was resolved to take advantage of the rising north wind and flee to Crown Point. They weighed anchor at ten o'clock, and passed unobserved through the enemy's lines, Arnold's crippled galley bringing up the rear. It was a bold and successful movement. At dawn, the watch on the English decks strained their eyes in vain to discover any trace of their foes. They were at Schuyler's island, more than ten miles distant, engaged in stopping leaks and mending sails. A chase was immediately commenced, which lasted all that day and night.

Early in the morning of the thirteenth, the *Inflexible* and two other British vessels, overtook some of the American flotilla, and poured a destructive fire upon them. The *Washington*, commanded by General Waterbury, was compelled to surrender, and he and all his men were made prisoners-of-war. The whole force of the enemy now fell upon the *Congress*, and for four hours Arnold sustained the unequal conflict with unflinching resolution. His galley was at length reduced to almost a wreck, and one third of his crew were killed Seven vessels of the enemy, sometimes within musket-shot, were dealing deadly blows upon her, and still the intrepid Arnold fought on. At last, when longer resistance would be vain, he ran his sinking galley and four gondolas into a creek on the east

side of the lake, ten miles below Crown Point, set them on fire, and by wading when the vessels struck, with their muskets held over their heads, his surviving crews escaped. Arnold remained upon the *Congress* until driven off by the fire, and was the last man that reached the shore. He kept the flags flying, and remained upon the spot until his vessels were consumed, and then, with the small remnant of his soldiers, he marched off through the woods toward Chimney Point, and reached Crown Point in safety. The rapidity of his march saved him from an Indian ambuscade, that waylaid his path an hour after he had passed by.

The remnant of Arnold's flotilla was at Crown Point when he arrived. He was there joined by General Waterbury and most of his men, the next day, who had been released on parole; and, after destroying all things at Crown Point which they could not carry away, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, they all embarked for Ticonderoga. The whole American loss in the two actions, was between eighty and ninety, and that of the enemy about forty. Although defeated and repulsed, the skill, bravery, and obstinate resistance of Arnold and his men against such a vastly superior force, gained for them unbounded applause. It has been truly observed, that "there are few instances on record of more deliberate courage and gallantry, than were displayed by him from the beginning to the end of the action."*

On the fourteenth of November, General Carleton took possession of Crown Point, where he was joined by his whole army, that came up from St. John. He remained there a few days, and made several movements by land and water, as if meditating an attack upon Ticonderoga. Gates made provisions for his reception, but Carleton was too discreet to risk his troops at that late season of the year, so deep in the enemy's country, without the prospect of a more adequate reward than the simple possession of an indifferent fortress. So he wisely re-embarked his army, returned to St. John, and cantoned them in Canada for the winter. General Gates was certified of their retreat on the first of November, and an

* Sparks's Life and Treason of Benedict Arnold; Library of American Biography, iii., 79

express was sent to the commander-in-chief with the pleasing intelligence.* He received it, as we have observed, at Peekskill, and all apprehensions of an invasion from Canada for the next four months were dismissed from his mind.

We will now resume the consideration of events with which Washington was more immediately connected.

November and December, 1776, were months of great trial to the commander-in-chief, for reverse followed reverse in the field, and the prospects for a satisfactory organization of a new army, were very discouraging. The hope of freedom for the confederated states seemed to be suspended upon a fragile thread. With the fall of Fort Washington, Fort Lee became useless, for the project of obstructing Hudson's river at that point was necessarily abandoned. Washington, therefore, determined to order its immediate evacuation, and directed all the ammunition and stores to be removed into the interior of New Jersey. This work was in progress when, early in the morning of the twentieth of November, Greene received intelligence that the enemy, in considerable force, had crossed the river and landed upon the Jersey shore. They were six thousand strong, under Lord Cornwallis. They had chosen a dark and rainy night for the purpose, intending a surprise. They crossed the river in two divisions, one from Kingsbridge, and the other from Dobbs' Ferry, and all landed at Closter dock, at the foot of the lofty cliffs of the Palisades, five or six miles above Fort Lee.

At ten o'clock the enemy commenced their ascent by a narrow road, dragging their heavy cannon up the steep. Greene sent out troops to check their advance, and at the same time despatched a courier to the commander-in-chief, at Hackensack, five miles distant. Three quarters of an hour after the messenger's arrival, Washington was at the fort. It was then evident that the British were making strong efforts to gain the rear of the Americans, hem in the garri-

* On the eighth of November, General Schuyler wrote to the commander-in-chief from Albany, as follows: "I have the honor to inform your excellency, that General Gates has advised me of the retreat of the British troops from Crown Point. The last of them left Crown Point on Monday morning. Sir John Johnson is returned with them." Schuyler wrote to the New York convention on the same day, to the same effect.

son between Hudson's and Hackensack rivers, and seize the fort with all its appointments. Washington immediately ordered a recall of the troops sent out to oppose the enemy, and a retreat across the Hackensack. These movements were made in great haste, for the enemy were close upon them by this time. Sufficient horses could not be procured for the emergency, and a large quantity of artillery, baggage, stores, and provisions, standing tents and camp kettles upon the fires, were abandoned. Only two twelve-pound cannon were carried off. It was a most precipitate flight; and when the republicans had crossed to the western side of Hackensack bridge, the royalists were at the eastern end. The latter did not immediately follow, and the Americans were allowed time to recover breath for a further retreat, the commander-in-chief having resolved not to risk a battle in the open country. "As this country is almost a dead flat," he said, in a letter to General Lee on the twenty-first, "and we have not an intrenching tool, nor above three thousand men, and they much broken and dispirited, not only with our ill success, but the loss of their tents and baggage, I have resolved to avoid any attack, though by so doing I must leave a very fine country open to their ravages, or a plentiful storehouse from which they will draw voluntary supplies."

When the British halted at Hackensack on the day of the flight from Fort Lee, Colonel Grayson, one of Washington's aids, wrote to General Lee in behalf of the chief, expressing his excellency's desire that the former should immediately cross the Hudson, with the troops under his command, and on the New Jersey shore wait for further orders. Colonel Reed attempted to write to Lee at the same time, by an express that had been sent down by General Heath. Reed had neither pen, ink, nor paper with him. The light-horseman had a piece of rough brown paper in his pocket, and upon this, Reed, with an old pencil wrote: "Dear general, we are flying before the British. I pray"—here the pencil broke, when he told the messenger to carry the paper to General Lee, and tell him verbally to add after "I pray"—"you to push on and join us." Washington, on the following day, repeated to Lee his

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The Washington Pew in Christ Church, Philadelphia

Writing in his Journal in 1744, William Black, Secretary of a Commission appointed by Governor Gooch, of Virginia, says of Christ Church, it is "a very Stately Building, but is not yet Finished. The Painting of the Altar-piece, will when done be very Grand; two rows of Corinthian Pillars and Arches turned from the one to the other Support the Roof and the Galleries; the Peughs and Boxes were not all done . . ." This splendid edifice is one of principal interest in Philadelphia. Christ Church was selected by Congress in which to attend service on the occasion of the national fast on May 17, 1775. It was the church attended by Washington during his residence in Philadelphia. Both the president and his wife were communicants of the Episcopal Church.

desires as expressed through Colonel Grayson, giving as a reason, that the enemy was evidently changing the seat of war to the west side of the river, and that the inhabitants of New Jersey, perceiving a continental army apparently strong enough to support them, would more closely adhere to the republican cause.

Colonel Reed wrote again to Lee, on the twenty-first, but the purport and tenor of his letter was unworthy of the man to whom the commander-in-chief, in generous, unsuspecting confidence, had opened the inmost recesses of his heart. Reed partook largely of the general admiration of Lee's acknowledged military genius, and, lacking that strength of spirit which is essential to the preservation of faith in the hour of trial, he yielded to the tempter and burned incense at the shrine of an unworthy idol. "I do not mean to flatter or praise you at the expense of any other," he said, "but I confess I do think it is entirely owing to you that this army, and the liberties of America, so far as they are dependent upon it, are not totally cut off. You have decision, a quality often wanted in minds otherwise valuable, and I ascribe to this our escape from York island, from Kingsbridge, and the Plains, and have no doubt, had you been here, the garrison of Mount Washington would now have composed a part of this army. All these circumstances considered, I confess I ardently wish to see you removed from where, I think, there will be little call for your judgment and experience, to the place where they are likely to be so necessary; nor am I singular in my opinion. Every gentleman of the family, the officers and soldiers generally, have a confidence in you—the enemy constantly inquire where you are, and seem to be less confident when you are present."

In allusion to the loss of Fort Washington, Reed continued: "General Washington's own judgment, seconded by representations by us, would, I believe, have saved the men and their arms, but, unluckily, General Greene's judgment was adverse. This kept the general's mind in a state of suspense till the blow was struck. Oh! general, an indecisive mind is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall an army; how often have I lamented it this cam-

paign. All circumstances considered, we are in a very awful and alarming situation—one that requires the utmost wisdom and firmness of mind. As soon as the season will admit, I think yourself and some others should go to Congress and form the plan of a new army, point out their defects to them, and it may possibly prevail on them to lend their whole attention to this great object, even to the exclusion of every other.... I intended to say more, but the express is waiting, and I must conclude with my clear and explicit opinion that your presence is of the last importance."

This letter, betraying a positive lack of confidence in Washington as the supreme commander of the army, by one who knew him best, was like sweet incense to the nostrils of the ambitious Lee, and quickened that active disobedience to his superior which he immediately afterward manifested. It was a letter that revealed great weakness and want of common sagacity, or great unfaithfulness and ingratitude, in the writer; for from the hour when Washington took command of the army at Cambridge, Colonel Reed had been the honored recipient of that good man's closest confidence. The commander-in-chief regarded him as his purest, most disinterested, sympathizing, and faithful friend, into whose bosom he could pour his private griefs and receive a generous word of consolation. They had "taken sweet counsel together" in affairs kept secret from all others. In hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, they had been mutual sharers; and the adjutant-general was like a beloved son or brother in the affections of his chief. Nothing was concealed from him, and he well knew the thousand trials that daily beset the path of Washington. And now, in a dark hour, when sustaining hands were needed more than ever, this bosom-friend virtually deserted him, and gave his choicest strength—the confidence of his soul—to an adventurer, even then beloved and trusted by none, though admired by all—relied on as a *soldier* but not as a *man*. Reed was, for a moment, dazzled by the meteor-flash of an impetuous spirit, and turned his eyes from the steady planetary light of a lofty nature. It was an error that soon gave him cause for real sorrow, as we shall observe presently; and for months, and

even years, that moment's unfaithfulness was a thorn in the pillow of his reflections.

Washington renewed his retreat on the twenty-first, leaving three regiments to guard the passes of the Hackensack. He fled toward the Passaic; and before night he was at Newark, with that river between his camp and the pursuing enemy. At almost every step his army melted, for his men, half-clad, almost penniless, weary, and dispirited, deserted whenever opportunities offered. The enlistment term of those of Mercer's flying-camp had nearly expired, and he well knew, from past experience, that few would remain after that period, for hope was fast fading from the visions of the most sanguine. In this extremity Washington sent Colonel Reed to Burlington, with a letter to Governor Livingston, portraying his situation, and imploring his aid in bringing out the New Jersey militia to replenish the army. Mifflin was despatched to Philadelphia, at the same time, to ask the immediate aid of Congress and the Pennsylvania authorities.* Washington also wrote to General Schuyler, on the twenty-sixth, in compliance with a resolution of Congress, directing him to send down from the northern department the Pennsylvania and New Jersey troops, with orders to join his flying army. But General Lee was his chief reliance, for with him were soldiers near at hand, and who, Washington hoped, had already made the passage of the Hudson.

While half-suspecting, yet quite unwilling to believe, that Lee was meditating some independent manœuvres contrary to his instructions, Washington received confirmation of these suspicions, in the form of a letter from that officer, who was yet at North Castle. He excused himself for his delay by alleging that he had no adequate means for crossing the Hudson at Dobbs' Ferry; that to make the circuit by way of King's ferry, would defeat the object of his march; and that, instead of complying with his excellency's

* Mifflin personally appeared before the Congress, at their request, and gave a full account of the state of the army. He was requested by that body to remain in Philadelphia, and use his personal influence in raising troops in that city and the neighboring counties; and it was also determined to raise a regiment of artillery in Virginia. This was accomplished, and Charles Harrison was appointed colonel, and Edward Carrington lieutenant-colonel.—Journal of Congress, Nov. 26 and 30, 1776

request, he had ordered General Heath to detach two thousand men from his command in the Highlands, in the direction of the retreating army; "a mode," he said, "which I flatter myself will answer better what I conceive to be the spirit of the orders, than should I move the corps from hence. Withdrawing our troops from hence would be attended with some very serious consequences, which at present would be tedious to enumerate; as to myself, I hope to set out to-morrow." This was the beginning of General Lee's course of disobedience and treason, which terminated in his dismissal from the army in disgrace, twenty months afterward.

With rare knowledge of human nature, Lee turned to the New England people at this time. Before he had informed Washington of this virtual disobedience of orders, he wrote to the president of the Massachusetts council, and said: "Before the unfortunate affair at Fort Washington, it was my opinion that the two armies—that on the east and that on the west side of the North river—must rest each on its own bottom; that the idea of detaching and reinforcing from one side to the other, on every motion of the enemy, was chimerical; but to harbor such a thought in our present circumstances, is absolute insanity. In this invasion, should the enemy alter the present direction of their operations, and attempt to open the passage of the Highlands, or enter New England, I should never entertain the thought of being succored by the western army. I know it is impossible. We must, therefore, depend upon ourselves. To Connecticut and Massachusetts I shall look for assistance."*

On the following day he wrote to the same gentleman again. He had just received Reed's mischievous letter of the twenty-first, in which direct allusion was made to indecision on the part of Washington, and that word was Lee's text. "Indecision," he said, "bids fair for tumbling down the goodly fabric of American freedom, and with it the rights of mankind. 'Twas indecision of Congress prevented our having a noble army, and on an excellent footing.

* Letter to James Bowdoin, November 21, 1776. American Archives Fifth Series, iii., 794.

'Twas indecision in our military councils which cost us the garrison of Fort Washington, the consequences of which must be fatal, unless remedied in time by a contrary spirit. Enclosed I send you an extract of a letter from the general, on which you will make your comments;* and I have no doubt you will concur with me in the necessity of raising, immediately, an army to save us from perdition. Affairs appear in so important a crisis, that I think the resolves of the Congress must no longer too nicely weigh with us. We must save the community in spite of the ordinances of the legislature. There are times when we must commit treason against the laws of the state, for the salvation of the state. The present crisis demands this brave, virtuous kind of treason." Then, using his favorite mode of expression: "I will stake my head on the propriety of this measure," he conjured Bowdoin to waive all formalities, and increase the military force of his province as speedily as possible. "Send us a formidable body of militia," he continued, "to supply the place of continental troops, which I am ordered to convey over the river;" and then added the significant words: "Let your people be well supplied with blankets, and warm clothes, as I am determined, by the help of God, to unnest 'em, even in the dead of winter." The last sentence shows his evident intention tc remain on the east side of the Hudson, and attack the enemy in New York.

Taking an ungenerous advantage of the position in which Washington had been placed by the late reverses, he thus sought to disparage him in a powerful quarter for the most sinister purposes. He aspired to be the commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States, and he imagined the surest and quickest road to that honor to be over the broken reputation of Washington. He

* This extract was from Washington's letter written in the midst of great confusion at Hackensack, on the twenty-first, in which he said: "With respect to your situation, I am very much at a loss what now to determine. There is such a change of circumstances since the date of your letter, as seems to call for a change of measures. Your post will, undoubtedly, answer some important purposes; but whether so many or so great as your removal, is well worthy of consideration." Lee copied this portion of the letter, but wickedly suppressed the context, in which Washington declared it to be his opinion, that he (Lee) should immediately cross the Hudson into New Jersey. He meanly used this deferential courtesy as proof of the indecision of the commander-in-chief!

was willing to see him and his army sacrificed, if such a catastrophe would advance his own interests. He sought, meanwhile, by every means, to win more and more the confidence of the New England states, for he believed the time to be not very remote, when they would repudiate the authority of Congress, set up for themselves through the agency of a general convention, and then he would be the supreme military leader in the new confederacy. He even suggested a convention of the New England states, in a letter to Governor Trumbull about this time; and to President Weare, of New Hampshire, he wrote similar sentiments. These facts account for the tenacity with which Lee, with five thousand five hundred men under his command, clung to the eastern side of the Hudson, and refrained from crossing it until his delay became positive disobedience, and he dared not risk the perils of a court-martial.

Heath became the object of Lee's bitter dislike, because he would not bend to his will. In reporting to Washington his command to the latter, to send a detachment from his camp into New Jersey, Lee ironically said: "But that great man (as I might have expected) intrenched himself within the letter of his instructions, and refused to part with a single file, though I undertook to replace them with a part of my own." He then coolly informed the commander-in-chief, that so far from his hastening to the relief of the army beyond the Passaic, he was meditating an attack upon Roger's Queen's rangers. "If we succeed," he said, "it will have a great effect, and amply compensate for two days' delay." This letter had just been despatched, when he received one from the chief, in reply to a former one of his own, telling him in plain terms, that it was his (Lee's) division, not Heath's, that he wanted, as the forces under the latter must remain in the Highlands for the defence of the posts and passes there.

Lee still lingered, and his letters to Washington continued to be dated at North Castle. The patience of the commander-in-chief began to grow weary, and from Newark, where his army yet lay, he wrote a fifth letter to Lee, on the twenty-seventh, in which he said: "My former letters were so full and explicit, as to the neces-

sity of your marching as early as possible, that it is unnecessary to add more on that head. I confess I expected you would have been sooner in motion. The forces here, when joined by yours, will not be adequate to any great opposition."

To this letter Lee replied from Peekskill, in a subdued and conciliatory tone, explaining the causes of his tardiness; expressing a belief that the delay had been beneficial, because now he could enter New Jersey with a larger army; informing the chief that a part of his troops were already in motion in that direction; and concluding by saying: "I shall take care to obey your excellency's orders in regard to my march, as exactly as possible." At the same time he wrote an ill-natured letter to Heath, to whom he had again given orders to detach quite a large body of his troops for service in the Jerseys. "I perceive," he said, "that you have formed an idea, that should General Washington remove to the straits of Magellan, the instructions he left with you, upon a particular occasion, have, to all intents and purposes, invested you with a command separate from and independent of any other superiors." He concluded by informing him, that as Washington was now separated from the army on the east side of the river, he (Lee) was supreme commander there, and for the future would and must be obeyed.

Heath was not at all moved by this letter, nor did the presence, and menacing words of Lee, a day or two afterward, bend his purpose to be faithful to his instructions, as a dutiful soldier should.*

* Heath, in his "Memoirs," under date of November 30, gives a simple but graphic account of his interview with General Lee. When Lee arrived at Heath's quarters, he called him aside and said: "In point of law you are right, but in point of policy, I think you are wrong. I am going into the Jerseys for the salvation of America; I wish to take with me a larger force than I now have, and request you to order two thousand of your men to march with me." General Heath answered that he could not spare that number. Lee then requested one thousand; to which Heath replied, that the business might as well be brought to a point at once — that not a single man should march from that post, by his order. Lee answered that he would order them himself. Heath replied that Lee was his superior, but he should not violate his instructions. He knew that the commander-in-chief did not intend to have a single man removed from the Highlands, for he had just received a letter from him to that effect. He showed the letter to Lee, when the latter observed: "The commander-in-chief is now at a distance, and does not know what is necessary here so well as I do." He then asked for the return-book of the division, and after running his eye over it, he said: "I will take Prescott's and Wyllys's regiments;" and turning to Major Huntington, remarked: "You will order those two regiments to march early to-morrow morning to join me." General Heath

His commander-in-chief commended him for his faithfulness, and reiterated his orders that the division under Heath should remain undivided, at the Highlands. This order gave General George Clinton great relief, for he felt that the safety of his state depended upon the preservation of the Highland passes.

Again the pursuing enemy pressed closely upon the Americans. Washington called a council-of-war. There was a marked difference of opinion, some advising a retreat to the hill-country at Morristown, and others coinciding with the commander-in-chief, in favor of making a stand at Brunswick, on the Raritan, or on the banks of the Delaware, as it was evident that Howe intended to push the invasion to Philadelphia, if possible. Greene agreed with Washington, and as the council could not make a satisfactory decision, the chief took the whole responsibility upon himself, broke up his encampment at Newark, and fled toward the Raritan. Cornwallis was so near, that when his advanced guard entered one end of the town, Washington's rearguard had just left the other; and the music of the pursuers and pursued was often heard by each.

The situation of the American army at Brunswick was very critical. The legislature of New Jersey, moving from place to

turned to Major Huntington and said: "Issue such orders at your peril." Then to General Lee, he said: "Sir, if you come to this post, and mean to issue orders here which will break those positive ones which I have received, I pray you to do it completely yourself, and through your own deputy-adjutant-general, who is present, and not draw me, or any of my family, in as partners in the guilt." Lee replied: "It is right. Colonel Scammel, do you issue the order." Scammel did so, and orders were immediately sent to the two regiments named, who were stationed at the gorge of the mountains, near Robinson's bridge, afterward called Continental Village. Heath then turned to Lee, and said: "Sir, I have one more request to make, and that is, that you will be pleased to give me a certificate, that you exercise command at this post, and do order from it Prescott's and Wyllys's regiments."—"I do not know that I will comply with your request," answered Lee; when General Clinton observed: "General Lee, you can not refuse a request so reasonable." Lee complied, and gave the certificate, dated December 1, 1776. As he left the room, he observed to an officer—"General Heath is right." Early the next morning the two regiments moved toward Peekskill, but before they reached it, Lee, who was ready to cross the river, rode up to Heath's door, and calling to him, observed: "Upon further consideration I have concluded not to take the two regiments with me—you may order them to return to their former post."

In concluding this narrative, Heath gives a striking picture of the destitution of the army. He says: "General Lee took with him into the Jerseys some as good troops as any in the service; but many of them were so destitute of shoes, that the blood left on the rugged, frozen ground, in many places, marked the route they had taken; and a considerable number, unable to march, were left at Peekskill."

place in alarm, was on the verge of dissolution, and Colonel Reed could not obtain even the promise of assistance from that body. The term of enlistment of the Maryland and New Jersey troops in the flying-camp had expired, and the entreaties and remonstrances of General Mercer, as he portrayed the great needs of the little army, and pointed out to them the disgrace of abandoning the cause when the enemy was so near, were utterly fruitless. The Pennsylvania levies, whose term would not expire until January, deserted in great numbers and returned home, notwithstanding guards were placed upon the roads and at the ferries to detain them. And the inhabitants of New Jersey, dismayed by the aspect of affairs, were paralyzed, and could not move. Utter ruin appeared to be inevitable.

It was at this time, when the cloud of perplexity that lay heavily upon the mind and heart of Washington was darkest, that the disaffection of Colonel Reed was revealed. The latter was then on his errand at Burlington. A letter came to the chief for him, from General Lee, in reply to his of the twenty-first. According to custom, Washington opened it, as it was directed to his adjutant-general, when he read:—

"My Dear Reed: I received your most obliging, flattering letter. I lament with you, that fatal indecision of mind, which, in war, is a much greater disqualification than stupidity, or even want of personal courage. Accident may put a decisive blunderer in the right, but eternal defeat and miscarriage must attend the man of the best parts, if cursed with indecision." He then mentioned the pressing recommendations of the general, which amounted "almost to an order," to join him in the Jerseys, with his troops, and said it threw him "into the greatest dilemma;" and gave Reed as a reason for his disobedience, his intention to attack Rogers. He then referred to a letter he had just received from the Spanish governor of New Orleans, in which he addressed Lee by the title of "General of the United States of America," as if he was supreme commander. Lee closed his letter by saying, that "the business I mention of Rogers and company being over, I shall then fly to

you; for, to confess a truth, I really think our chief will do better with me than without me."

This letter deeply moved the sensitive spirit of the commander-in-chief, for he perceived not only the unfriendly feelings and unfavorable opinions of General Lee, but the disaffection of his "own familiar friend." It was evident that this epistle could only be a response to kindred sentiments expressed by Reed. Washington immediately enclosed it and sent it to his adjutant-general, at Burlington, accompanied by the following cold note—a note which, when compared with his general's previous letters, must have chilled the very soul of Reed:—

"The enclosed was put into my hands by an express from White Plains. Having no idea of its being a private letter, much less suspecting the tendency of the correspondence, I opened it, as I had done all other letters to you from the same place and Peekskill, upon the business of your office, as I conceived and found them to be. This, as it is the truth, must be my excuse for seeing the contents of a letter which neither inclination nor intention would have prompted me to. I thank you for the trouble and fatigue you have undergone in your journey to Burlington, and sincerely wish your labors may be crowned with the desired success."

Colonel Reed could make no reply, and from that hour the intercourse of the two friends was coldly polite for a long time. When Reed left the army for awhile, Washington's letters to him related only to business, and became more and more infrequent. Reed endured this torture for several months, all the while burning with an intense desire for an opportunity to make such an explanation as should restore to him the former confidence of his general, for he loved and admired him. That opportunity was offered and improved in March following.* A correspondence ensued, honorable

* On the eighth of March, 1777, Colonel Reed wrote to Washington concerning his appointment to the command of a company of horse, and then took the opportunity to say:—

"I could have wished to have one hour of private conversation with you, on the subject of a letter to me written by General Lee before his captivity. I deferred it in hopes of obtaining from him the letter to which his was an answer. I fear, from what we hear, that he will be sent to Eng-

alike to both parties, and the wound was healed. It was well for Colonel Reed that the chief never saw the letter written to Lee, for there were expressions in it which no explanation could have excused, under the circumstances.

land, and of course there will be little probability of my obtaining it. While he stays in America, I can not give up my hopes, and, in the mean time, I most solemnly assure you, that you would see in it nothing inconsistent with that respect and affection which I have, and ever shall bear to your person and character. My pressing him most earnestly to join you as soon as possible, and mentioning that Mount Washington was taken before any decision was had respecting it, led to expressions and an answer which must have been disapproved by you, and which I was far from expecting. I had rather multiply instances than repeat assurances of my respect and attachment. No man in America, my dear general, more truly and ardently wishes you honor, happiness, and success, or would more exert himself to promote them. I say more upon this occasion, from a probability that we shall not renew our military connection, and therefore can have no interest than that of securing your esteem, free from all selfish principles."

Colonel Reed then made to the commander-in-chief, a sincere tender of his services, "at any time of particular difficulty," if he thought it would lighten any part of the heavy burden which he was called upon by Providence to support. In May following, Colonel Reed was promoted to brigadier-general, and on the twenty-ninth, Washington appointed him to the command of the light-horse of his army. Reed gratefully acknowledged the generous kindness of the chief, on the fourth of June, and said:—

"The abuse and calumny which, with equal cowardice and baseness, some persons have bestowed, would have given me little pain, if I did not apprehend that it had lessened me in your friendship and esteem. In this part I confess I have received the severest wound; for I am sure you are too just and discerning to suffer the unguarded expressions of another person to obliterate the proofs I had given of a sincere, disinterested attachment to your person and fame, since you first favored me with your regard. I am sensible, my dear sir, how difficult it is to regain lost friendship; but the consciousness of never justly having forfeited yours, and the hope that it may be in my power fully to convince you of it, are some consolation for an event, which I never think of but with the greatest concern. In the meantime, my dear general, let me entreat you to judge of me by realities, not by appearances, and believe that I never entertained or expressed a sentiment incompatible with that regard I professed for your person and character, and which, whether I shall be so happy as to possess your future good opinion or not, I shall carry to my grave with me.

"A late perusal of the letters you honored me with at Cambridge and New York, last year, afforded me a melancholy pleasure. I can not help acknowledging myself deeply affected, on a comparison with those which I have since received. I should not, my dear sir, have trespassed on your time and patience at this juncture so long, but that a former letter upon this subject, I fear, has miscarried; and, whatever may be my future destination and course of life, I could not support the reflection of being thought ungrateful and insincere to a friendship which was equally my pride and my pleasure. May God Almighty crown your virtue, my dear and much respected general, with deserved success, and make your life as happy and honorable to yourself, as it has been useful to your country."

To this Washington replied, a few days afterward, as follows:—

"True it is, I felt myself hurt by a certain letter, which appeared at that time to be the echo of one from you. I was hurt, not because I thought my judgment wronged by the expressions contained in it; but because the same sentiments were not communicated immediately to myself. The favorable manner in which your opinions, upon all occasions, had been received, the impression they made, and the unreserved manner in which I wished and required them to be given, entitled me, I thought, to your advice upon any point in which I appeared to be wanting. To meet with anything, then, that carried with it a complexion of withholding that advice from me, and censuring my conduct to another, was such an argument of disingenuity, that I was not a little mortified at it. However, I am perfectly satisfied that matters were not as they appeared from the letter alluded to."

I have given these copious extracts from the correspondence between Washington and Reed on this unpleasant subject, because the facts have an intimate relation with events yet to be narrated.

CHAPTER XXV.

CRITICAL SITUATION OF WASHINGTON'S ARMY — BRITISH PROCLAMATION — FAITHFULNESS OF GOVERNOR LIVINGSTON — RETREAT TOWARD PRINCETON — FLIGHT CONTINUED TO TRENTON — WASHINGTON URGES LEE TO JOIN HIM — TARDINESS OF THAT OFFICER — HIS IMPERTINENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE — WASHINGTON REINFORCED — TURNS BACK TOWARD PRINCETON — THE MILITIA COMPLAINED OF — ADVANCE OF CORNWALLIS — RETREAT OF THE AMERICANS — WASHINGTON AND HIS ARMY CROSS THE DELAWARE — THE ENEMY FOILED — CORRESPONDENCE WITH LEE — HIS CONTINUED DISOBEDIENCE — REINFORCEMENTS FROM THE NORTH — APPROACH OF GATES — CAPTURE OF GENERAL LEE — POSITION OF THE TWO ARMIES ON THE DELAWARE — PHILADELPHIA TO BE FORTIFIED — FLIGHT OF THE CONGRESS — WASHINGTON CREATED DICTATOR.

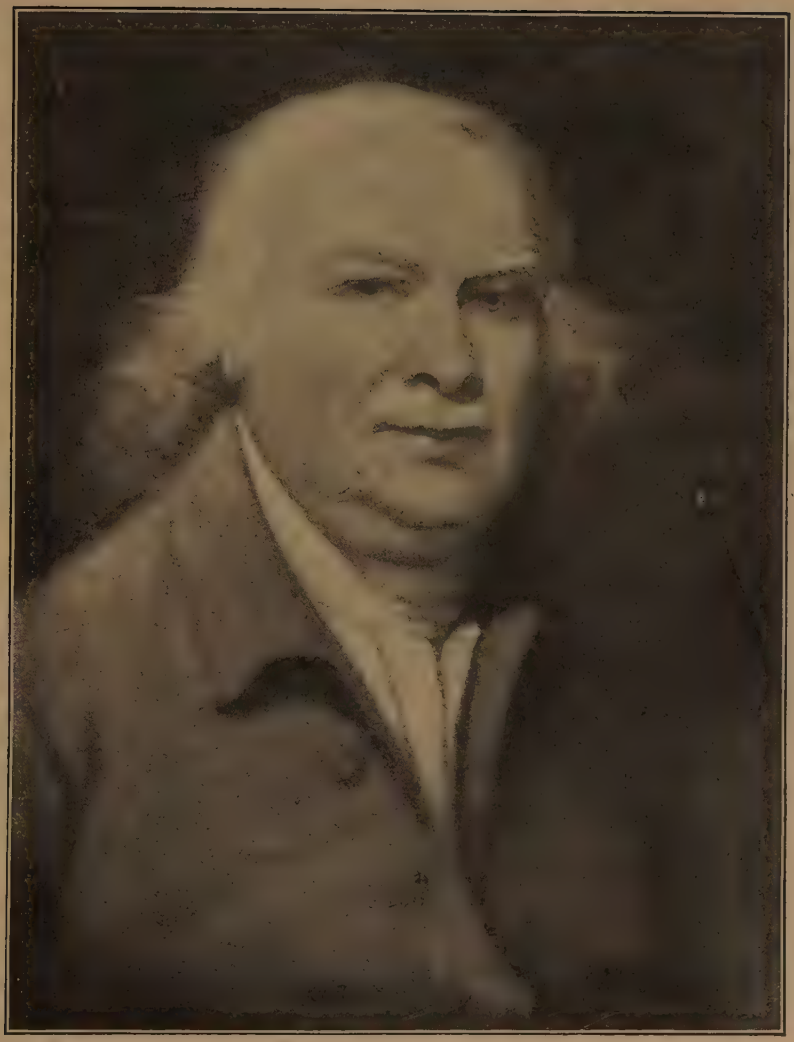
WASHINGTON remained at Brunswick until the first of December, using every effort in his power to save his dissolving army. He looked anxiously for reinforcements from Pennsylvania, the North, and from Lee, but the latter still lingered, hoping, no doubt, to hear of the capture of Washington and his little force, or to find an opportunity to strike a blow himself. Again the chief wrote to him, informing him of the advance of the enemy, and his own impotency to confront him, saying: "I must entreat you to hasten your march as much as possible, as your arrival may be too late to answer any valuable purpose." And now, again, the chief implored Governor Livingston to arouse the militia of New Jersey, if possible, but the call was in vain. Utter despondency had taken possession of men's minds in that state; and at the same time, from the chief commanders of the British forces in America, before whose victorious march the republican troops were flying, went forth a command, by proclamation,* in the name of the king, that all persons whatsoever, who were assembled together in arms, should disband and return home; and all congresses, conventions, commit-

* This proclamation of the brothers Howe, was dated November 30th, 1776.

Robert Morris

From the original by Gilbert Stuart, in possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Born in Liverpool, Robert Morris had lived in Philadelphia since his thirteenth year and had acquired eminence among the merchants of that city at the time of the Revolutionary troubles. He opposed the Stamp Act and signed the non-importation agreement in 1765; was a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1775 and at first opposed the Declaration of Independence, but on its adoption signed it. On the opening of hostilities he took a most active and important part in raising money for the Continental army, pledging his credit against funds he was chiefly instrumental in securing. It was to Morris that Washington turned for financial support of the army after the decisive victory at Trenton and received from him the requisite funds and the added promise of further supplies. Later, in 1780, he made possible the operations that ended in the surrender of Yorktown. In 1781 he was elected superintendent of finance, and in December of that year he came to the aid of the distressed government by organizing the Bank of North America. He resigned his office of finance superintendent in 1784.



tees of safety, and other associations hostile to his majesty, to cease their treasonable doings and disperse. With these commands pardon and protection were offered; and many, especially men of property, regarding the republican cause as hopeless, took advantage of the proposition.

Governor Livingston was powerless, for the moment, and he could give Washington his warmest sympathies only. These were much, in that dark hour of trial, and the heart of the commander-in-chief was filled with grateful emotions when that patriot wrote: "I can easily form some idea of the difficulties under which you labor, particularly of one for which the public can make no allowance, because your prudence and fidelity to the cause will not suffer you to reveal it to the public; an instance of magnanimity superior, perhaps, to any that can be shown in battle. But depend upon it, my dear sir, the impartial world will do you ample justice before long. May God support you under that fatigue, both of body and mind, to which you must be constantly exposed."

The enemy approached the Raritan on the afternoon of the first of December, and Washington, after causing the end of the bridge nearest Brunswick to be destroyed, fled with his army toward Princeton, leaving Captain Hamilton to plant his field-pieces on the high bank of the river, to check any attempt of the enemy to cross, it being fordable at that time. At Princeton he left more than a thousand men, in two divisions, under Lord Stirling and General Adam Stephen, and pushed on toward Trenton with the remainder of the army. General Stephen had been second in command of the Virginia troops in the French war, under Washington, and having been recently appointed a brigadier, by Congress, he was now in the field with a detachment of troops from the Old Dominion.

The fugitive army reached Trenton on the morning of the second, and Washington immediately ordered the removal of all the military and other stores and baggage, over the Delaware, and prepared to cross with his little army, if circumstances should require. There he again wrote to Lee, the seventh time, urging him to press

forward. "The sooner you can join me with your division," he said, "the sooner the service will be benefited. As to bringing any troops under General Heath, I can not consent to it. The posts they are at, and the passes through the Highlands, being of the utmost importance, they must be guarded by good men." To Congress he wrote, on the same day: "I have not heard a word from General Lee since the twenty-sixth of last month; which surprises me not a little, as I have despatched daily expresses to him, desiring to know when I might look for him." Congress was as much in the dark concerning Lee as Washington was, and on the second of December, they instructed a committee "to send an express to General Lee, to know where and in what situation he and the army with him are."

On the fourth of December, Washington received a letter from Lee, dated at Haverstraw. He had just crossed the Hudson, and coolly informed his chief, that having heard of his retreat from Brunswick, it was impossible to know where he could join him! "But," he added, "although I should *not be able to join you at all*, the service which I can render you, will, I hope, be full as efficacious." Then, after informing him that he should place himself at the head of the troops from the North, then on their way toward Morristown, making his combined force five thousand in number, he said: "I entreat you to order some of your suite to take out of the way of danger my favorite mare, which is at that Wilson's, three miles beyond Princeton."

What consummate impudence and heartlessness! For days the commander-in-chief, with his army in the greatest peril, had been beseeching this villain (for such he proved to be) to hasten to his aid; and now, when the menaced liberties of the country demanded every effort, every sacrifice, every thought on the part of those who had espoused the cause, this adventurer (who refused to go into the contest at all, unless the Congress would first agree to indemnify him for any loss that he might sustain thereby), asks his chief to turn aside from his high duty, and see that his favorite mare is placed out of the reach of the enemy! And only three

days afterward, in a letter to Governor Cook, of Rhode Island, he meanly attempted to disparage Washington, by general reflections, saying: "Theory joined to practice, or a heaven-born genius, can alone constitute a general. As to the latter, God Almighty indulges the modern world very rarely with the spectacle; and I do not know, from what I have seen, that he has been more profuse of this ethereal spirit to the Americans, than to other nations."

The enemy loitered so long at Brunswick, that Washington had ample time to remove his baggage and stores across the Delaware. On the fifth of December he informed the Congress of his situation, and being in hourly expectation of receiving a reinforcement of fifteen hundred Pennsylvanians, that were on their march, under Mifflin, he said: "I shall now face about with such troops as are here fit for service, and march back to Princeton, and there govern myself by circumstances and the movements of General Lee. At any event, the enemy's progress may be retarded by this means, if they intend to come on, and the people's fears in some measure quieted, if they do not." He then complained of the militia, and charged his present position as a fugitive before the enemy, to their tardiness in coming to his support, their continual desertions, and their refusal to stay a moment when enlistment terms expired; and he took this fitting occasion again to urge upon the Congress the necessity for establishing a strong standing army; the militia, under the short enlistment system, he said, being nothing but "a destructive, expensive, and disorderly mob."—"I am clear in the opinion," he said, "that if forty thousand men had been kept in constant pay since the first commencement of hostilities, and the militia had been excused from doing duty during that period, the continent would have saved money. When I reflect on the losses we have sustained for want of good troops, the certainty of this is placed beyond a doubt, in my mind.... When danger is a little removed from them, they will not turn out at all. When it comes home to them, the well-affected, instead of flying to arms to defend themselves, are busily employed in removing their families and effects, whilst the disaffected are concerting measures to make their sub-

mission, and spread terror and dismay all around, to induce others to follow their example. Daily experience and abundant proofs warrant this information." He assured Congress that it would be madness to depend upon the militia another year.

Washington sent twelve hundred men, on the fifth, to reinforce Lord Stirling, at Princeton, and on the seventh he started for the same place himself, with the residue of his army. On the way he received, first, a letter from General Greene, informing him that Lee was "on the heels of the enemy;" and then an express from Lord Stirling, with the startling intelligence that Cornwallis was within three miles of Princeton, under full march. That officer, knowing how far Lee was in the rear, and how really weak was the army of Washington, had made a forced march from Brunswick, and driven Stirling toward Trenton. Washington immediately turned back, caused boats to be collected from all quarters, and sent his army and all its appointments across the Delaware to the Pennsylvania shore during the night. The commander-in-chief had crossed, with the rearguard, in the morning (Sunday, the eighth of December), just as Cornwallis came down, with great pomp and parade to the opposite shore, expecting to find boats sufficient to transport his army over, and enable him to push on toward Philadelphia. A march to the federal city was not in Howe's plan as late as his despatch to the ministry, on the thirtieth of November, but recent events had caused a change in his views.

Washington caused all the boats to be destroyed, and placing strong guards at the crossing-places of the Delaware, he took up his quarters at Mr. Berkeley's summer-seat, a mile from the river. There he wrote to the president of Congress, informing him of the retreat, and saying: "There is not a moment's time to be lost in assembling such force as can be collected, as the object of the enemy can not now be doubted in the smallest degree. Indeed, I shall be out in my conjecture, for it is only conjecture, if the late embarkation at New York is not for Delaware river, to co-operate with the army under the immediate command of General Howe, who, I am informed from good authority, is with the British troops,

and his whole force upon this route."* He added: "I have no certain intelligence from General Lee, although I have sent frequent expresses to him, and lately Colonel Humpton, to bring me some accurate accounts of his situation. I last night despatched another gentleman to him, Major Hoops, desiring he would hasten his march to the Delaware, in which I would provide boats, near a place called Alexandria, for the transportation of his troops. I can not account for the slowness of his march."

Lee soon explained this problem. In his reply to Washington's letter by Major Hoops, he affected to be shocked to hear of the inadequacy of the commander-in-chief's forces; yet with such information, when the first impulse of a true republican would have been to fly to the rescue of the imperilled little army, he had the effrontery to inform his chief, virtually, that he should not obey his commands, for he did not believe Philadelphia to be the object of the enemy at present, and that he had placed himself in a position to attack them in the rear. This appears to have been his fixed purpose ever since he crossed the Hudson, and he constantly watched for an opportunity to strike a victorious blow, independent of Washington, by which laurels would be stripped from the brow of the chief, and placed upon his own. He used every plausible means to strengthen himself and keep Washington weak; and for this purpose, when informed by General Heath, that three of the seven regiments detached by Gates from the northern army to reinforce the commander-in-chief, had arrived at Peekskill, he instantly ordered them to join his own force at Morristown, instead of urging them to press forward toward the Delaware. "I am in hopes," he said, "to reconquer (if I may so express myself) the Jerseys. It was really in the hands of the enemy before my arrival."†

On the tenth, Washington wrote another letter to Lee, temperate

* Washington had received information, a few days before, that one hundred and seventeen British vessels had gone from Sandy Hook, and he had no doubt that they were bound for the Delaware river. He had also been informed, that General Howe had joined the British army at Brunswick with reinforcements.

* Letter to General Heath, December 9, 1776

and courteous in language, but more urgent in tone. "I can not but request and entreat you," he said, "and this, too, by the advice of all the general officers with me, to march and join me with your whole force with all possible expedition. The utmost exertions that can be made, will not be more than sufficient to save Philadelphia. Without the aid of your force, I think there is but little if any prospect of doing it.... Do come on; your arrival may be fortunate, and, if it can be effected without delay, it may be the means of preserving a city, whose loss must prove of the most fatal consequence to the cause of America."

But Lee still lingered, and on the eleventh he wrote from Morristown, excusing his tardiness by the plea that his troops had been compelled to halt two days for want of shoes; and he actually proposed to cross the Brunswick road, athwart the path of the enemy, and by a forced night's march, make his way to the ferry above Burlington, where boats must be sent up from Philadelphia to convey his army across. Washington's patience was now exhausted, and in reply, he said: "I am much surprised that you should be in any doubt respecting the route you should take, after the information you have had upon that head, as well by letter as from Major Hoops, who was despatched for the purpose. A large number of boats was procured, and is still retained at Tinicum, under a strong guard, to facilitate your passage across the Delaware. I have so frequently mentioned our situation, and the necessity of your aid, that it is painful to me add a word more upon the subject." He then directed Lee what route to take, advised him of the movements of the Congress, and the fact that they had directed Philadelphia to be defended to the utmost extremity. Fortunately for the republican cause, when this letter was written General Lee was powerless for immediate evil, and all of his ambitious designs were frustrated.

At this time General Gates was on his way with four regiments from the north. He had left the Hudson at Esopus, and crossed the interior of the country along the valleys of the Wallkill and Minisink to eastern New Jersey. When just within its borders, on

the eleventh of December, he was overtaken by a heavy snow-storm in a valley, and cut off from all sources of information respecting the movements of the belligerent armies. He sent forward Major James Wilkinson, his active young aid-de-camp, in search of Washington to obtain orders respecting his march. Wilkinson soon learned that the commander-in-chief had crossed the Delaware, that all the boats were destroyed, and that he would find it very difficult to reach the general's quarters. In this dilemma he turned toward Morristown to consult with General Lee, the second in command of the continental army.

Lee's troops were at Vealtown, eight miles from Morristown, and he had taken up his own quarters at a tavern at Baskingridge, three miles from his camp. There, at four o'clock on the morning of the fourteenth, Wilkinson found him in bed, and presented to him the letter of Gates to Washington. Lee, after some hesitation, opened and read it, and directing Wilkinson to take some rest, slumbered on himself until eight o'clock, when he came down, as usual, half-dressed, dirty in appearance, and with a pair of old slippers on his feet.

After inquiring of Wilkinson concerning affairs in the north, Lee, unmindful of his relative position to a stripling subaltern, commenced an ill-natured tirade against the officers of Washington's army, and strongly condemned almost every movement of the campaign. After a late breakfast, he proceeded to write a letter to Gates, in the same censorious spirit. "The ingenious manœuvre of Fort Washington," he said, "has completely unhinged the good fabric we have been building. There never was so damned a stroke; *entre nous*, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. He has thrown me into a situation where I have my choice of difficulties; if I stay in this province I risk myself and army; and if I do not stay the province is lost for ever.... Our counsels have been weak to the last degree. As to what relates to yourself, if you think you can be in time to aid the general, I would have you, by all means, go. You will, at least, save your army."

Just as Lee had signed this letter, Wilkinson, who stood looking down a short lane from a window, saw a troop of British dragoons approaching at full gallop. They were commanded by Colonel Harcourt, one of the most active young officers in the British army. Wilkinson gave the alarm, but in a moment the careless guard, who, without their arms, stood warming themselves in the sun on the south side of a building across the road, were dispersed, and Lee's quarters were surrounded. A few minutes afterward Lee was made prisoner, and with the shout that announced the achievement, was mingled the trumpet-note of recall and retreat, before Sullivan should come to the rescue. So sudden was the arrest, and so quick was the departure, that Lee, mounted on Wilkinson's horse, was hurried away bareheaded, with nothing but slippers on his feet, and a blanket-coat on his back. At mid-day, the booming of cannon at Brunswick attested the joy of the British because of the success of Harcourt.

When the dragoons had departed, Wilkinson mounted the first horse he could find, and hastened to Sullivan, who was now in general command of Lee's division, and was on his march toward Pluckemin. He communicated to him the facts of Lee's capture, and then departed to join Gates, carrying with him the open letter that Lee had finished at the moment of his surprise.*

The British were very jubilant over the capture of General Lee. Over-estimating his importance, they exclaimed: "We have taken the American Palladium!" but Sir Joseph Yorke, one of England's most acute diplomatists, at that time, who knew Lee well, said: "He is the worst present any army can receive." In view of the recent past, Washington, no doubt, felt an inward satisfaction because Lee was stripped of his power to do mischief; but public policy made it expedient for him to conceal his feelings. In his official letters he deplored his loss, and was consistent in so doing, for the recreancy of a brave and skillful officer is always to be deplored; but in a letter to his brother, on the eighteenth, he was less reserved. "Before you receive this letter," he said, "you will,

* Wilkinson's Memoirs, i., 100–106.

undoubtedly, have heard of the captivity of General Lee. This is an additional misfortune, and the more vexatious, as it was by his own folly and imprudence, and without a view to effect any good that he was taken."

There were many who regarded the circumstances of Lee's capture as evidence of his unfaithfulness to the cause he had espoused; for his conduct during the retreat through New Jersey, had excited distrust of his fidelity in the minds of some of the most thoughtful officers of the army; while others, still dazzled by his lofty pretensions, mourned over his captivity as a public calamity. John Hancock, Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, and other leading men were alarmed. The latter, in a letter to Richard Henry Lee, said: "Since the captivity of General Lee, a distrust has crept in among the troops of the abilities of some of our general officers high in command. They expect nothing now from heaven-taught and booktaught generals."—"I am afraid his loss will be severely felt," wrote John Hancock to Robert Morris, "as he was in a great measure the idol of the officers, and possessed still more the confidence of the soldiery." And Trumbull, Gates's adjutant-general, after deploring the condition of affairs, said: "New York and New Jersey totally lost except the backwoods; the army inferior, and at the same time, when most wanted, deprived of the best, almost the only, officer who could rescue them from a situation so nigh desperate."

Wilkinson, who was high in the confidence of Gates (Lee's intimate friend and admirer), who was well acquainted with all the facts in the case, and who was privy to many of the secrets of the conspiracy of Gates, Lee, and others, a year later, to deprive Washington of the supreme command, mentions, in his "Memoirs," the prevalence of suspicions of Lee's fidelity; and a British soldier wrote: "It was an aggravation of the misfortune to lose him under such circumstances, which favored an opinion that, despairing of the American cause, he suffered himself to be taken prisoner."* The circumstances certainly did favor such an opinion. His dis-

* Journal of Occurrences, &c., by R. Lamb, page 130.

tance from camp with only a few followers, and the directness with which Harcourt came to his quarters from Brunswick, were strongly suspicious circumstances. It was asserted and believed at the time, that the information of Lee's position, and the guidance thereto, was the work of a tory, but subsequent testimony proved that Harcourt compelled a whig, resident in the vicinity of Baskingridge, to show him the way to White's tavern, where Lee was quartered. And the light of more recent revelations, which we shall hereafter cite, leaves us little reason for doubting that Lee became a willing captive.

Wilkinson, who believed Lee's motives in disobeying Washington's orders to have been patriotic, "though intimately connected with sinister ambition," was of opinion that, in the moment of his capture, he meditated a stroke against the enemy, "which, in its consequences, would have depressed General Washington, elevated himself, and immediately served the cause of the United States."* He also tells us that a rumor then prevaled, that a motion had actually been made in Congress tending to supersede Washington and that, had Lee struck a successful blow before the battle at Trenton, he would have been made commander-in-chief of the continental army. In view of this contingency, how providential, whether it was voluntary or involuntary, was the capture of Lee!

Let us now consider events on the Delaware.

Cornwallis was disappointed on his arrival at Trenton, by not finding boats for the passage of his army, and after making one or two movements indicative of his intention to cross at some eligible place, he gave up the pursuit. He looked with so much contempt upon the broken army of Washington, and was so confident that he could go forward and capture the federal city at any time, that he resolved to wait for the frost to lay a bridge of ice over the Delaware, sufficiently strong for the passage of his troops. That confidence in the future made him careless, and he stationed his forces in detachments, over quite an extent of country, in a manner not creditable to his sagacity or military skill. The German troops

* Memoirs, i., 107

were cantoned at Trenton and Bordentown, and other detachments were stationed at Burlington, Mount Holly, and Black Horse, while the main British army, with the military stores, remained at Brunswick. Having made this disposition of his forces, Cornwallis returned to New York, and prepared to sail for England on leave of absence, believing the rebellion to be virtually at an end.

Washington's entire army, at this time, including reinforcements, did not exceed five thousand five hundred men. Two thousand of these were from Pennsylvania, and one thousand were New Jersey militia. Lee's division, under Sullivan, and the detachment led by Gates, had not yet arrived; and every hour the peril that menaced the broken army increased. December frosts were rapidly preparing the ice bridge for the invaders; and at that moment intelligence came, that a British fleet, under Sir Peter Parker, had entered Narraganset bay, blockaded the little squadron of Commodore Hopkins, and placed Rhode Island under the iron heel of ministerial rule. The public treasury was exhausted, the credit of the federal legislature had utterly failed, distrust in Congress and in the army everywhere prevailed, and the sun of Liberty in America appeared to be going down amid the dark clouds of hopeless despair.

Yet Washington was undaunted. His faith in the ultimate triumph of the American arms seemed never to have burned with a brighter and steadier light, than at this dark moment. "Under a full persuasion of the justice of our cause," he said to his brother, "I can not entertain an idea that it will finally sink, though it may remain for some time under a cloud." When asked what he would do if Philadelphia should be taken, he replied: "We will retreat beyond the Susquehanna river, and thence, if necessary, to the Allegany mountains. Numbers will there repair to us for safety, and we will try a predatory war. If overpowered, we must cross the Alleganies." While there was the shadow of an army in the field, while Congress maintained its sittings and unity, while a single ray of hope for success remained, no thought of abandoning the righteous cause was harbored in the mind of that truly great

man. Already, in the very darkest hour, he had conceived the masterly stroke of military skill which presently brought forth such a radiant spark of hope and joy upon the frozen banks of the Delaware.*

But the Congress did not maintain their sittings. They were compelled to fly from approaching danger. As soon as Washington had crossed the Delaware, he despatched General Putnam to Philadelphia to take the chief command there, and, with Mifflin, to construct defensive fortifications at different points around the city. The inhabitants were greatly alarmed, and large numbers packed up their effects and fled to the interior. The Congress likewise became nervous. Fully alive to the necessity for the most energetic action, they put forth all their powers. They sent out a stirring appeal to the people, commenced a thorough organization of the army, according to the general plan arranged by a committee of Congress and the commander-in-chief upon Harlem heights, and authorized a loan of four millions of dollars, at four per cent. interest.

The impending danger finally became so imminent, that the Congress, pursuant to the advice of Generals Putnam and Mifflin, adjourned, on the twelfth, to Baltimore, in Maryland, where they reassembled on the twentieth. They wisely invested General Putnam with almost unlimited power in Philadelphia, placing under his control all the munitions of war in the city, and also authorizing him to employ all the private armed-vessels in that harbor for the defence of the town. They afterward appointed a committee, with powers to execute such business in behalf of Congress, in Philadelphia, as might be found proper and necessary.† Wiser than all was their resolution, on the day of adjournment, "that until the Congress shall otherwise order, General Washington be possessed of full power to order and direct all things relative to the department and the operations of war."‡

* Lee's Letter to Governor Trumbull, December 14, 1776. Sparks's Writings, &c., iv., 219.
† Robert Morris, George Clymer, and George Walton composed that committee.
‡ Journal of Congress, December 12, 1776.

Clothed with this power, the commander-in-chief proceeded immediately to recruit three battalions of artillery, and recommended the Congress to appoint Colonel Knox to the general command of this important branch of the service, with the commission of brigadier. He also promised an augmentation of twenty-five per cent. upon the pay of those whose terms of enlistment were about to expire, and also a bounty of ten dollars to the men for six week's service."

In a letter to Congress on the twentieth, Washington justified these arrangements by referring to the exigencies of the case, which, he said, "admit of no delay, either in the council or in the field." It was not a time, he said, "to stand upon expense;" nor would it answer to refer every matter whose utility was self-evident, to the Congress sitting one hundred and thirty or forty miles distant, for the delay would frequently defeat the object in view. "It may be said," he remarked, "that this is an application for powers that are too dangerous to be intrusted. I can only add, that desperate diseases require desperate remedies; and I with truth declare, that I have no lust after power, but I wish, with as much fervency as any man upon this wide-extended continent, for an opportunity of turning the sword into the ploughshare." Then, after assuring the Congress that if any good officers should "offer to raise men upon continental pay and establishment," in that quarter, he should encourage them to do so, and regiment them when they had done it, he added: "If Congress disapprove of this proceeding, they will please to signify it, as I mean it for the best. It may be thought that I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty to adopt these measures, or to advise thus freely. A character to lose, an estate to forfeit, the inestimable blessings of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse."

The changed aspect of public affairs, and the tried skill and integrity of the commander-in-chief, had caused that extreme jealousy of military power which marked the course of the Congress in its earlier days, to yield to the dictates of a wise policy, and on the twenty-seventh, that body, by the delegation of definite powers, created

Washington a MILITARY DICTATOR for six months.* His credentials to that effect were transmitted to him on the thirty-first, by the executive committee of the Congress, in Philadelphia, accompanied by a letter in which they remarked: "Happy is it for this country, that the general of their forces can safely be intrusted with the most unlimited power, and neither personal security, liberty, nor property be in the least degree endangered thereby."

* The following preamble and resolution, reported by a committee on the state of the army, were adopted by unanimous vote:—

"This Congress, having maturely considered the present crisis; and having perfect reliance on the wisdom, vigor, and uprightness of General Washington, do hereby—

"*Resolve*, That General Washington shall be, and he is hereby, vested with full, ample, and complete powers to raise and collect together, in the most speedy and effectual manner, from any or all of these United States, sixteen battalions of infantry, in addition to those already voted by Congress; to appoint officers for the said battalions of infantry; to raise, officer, and equip three thousand light-horse, three regiments of artillery, and a corps of engineers, and to establish their pay; to apply to any of the states for such aid of the militia as he shall think necessary; to form such magazines of provisions, and in such places as he shall think proper; to displace and appoint all officers under the rank of brigadier-general, and to fill up all vacancies in every other department in the American armies; to take, wherever he may be, whatever he may want for the use of the army, if the inhabitants will not sell it, allowing a reasonable price for the same; to arrest and confine persons who refuse to take the continental currency, or are otherwise disaffected to the American cause, and return to the states of which they are citizens, their names, and the nature of their offences, together with the witnesses to prove them:

"That the foregoing powers be vested in General Washington, for and during the term of six months from the date hereof, unless sooner determined by Congress."—Journal of Congress, December 27, 1776

CHAPTER XXVI.

WASHINGTON'S WISDOM VINDICATED — ARRIVAL OF GATES AND SULLIVAN — FEEBLENESS OF WASHINGTON'S ARMY — GLOOMY PROSPECTS — DEFECTION OF LEADING REPUBLICANS — WASHINGTON'S GRAVITY — HIS PLANS — GATES'S UNGENEROUS ASPIRATIONS — WILKINSON'S ACCOUNT — THE HESSIANS ON THE DELAWARE — DISPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN TROOPS — PLAN OF ATTACK — PHILADELPHIA TORIES — WASHINGTON'S ANXIOUS LETTER — MOVEMENTS OF HIS TROOPS TOWARD THE DELAWARE — WASHINGTON AND GATES — CROSSING THE DELAWARF — MARCH UPON TRENTON — BATTLE THERE — DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY — DEATH OF COLONEL RALLE.

WASHINGTON'S wisdom in promising increased pay and bounties for the soldiers, was immediately apparent. The cohesion of personal interest kept the dissolving army together for a time. The militia of Pennsylvania, animated also by the eloquent voice of Mifflin, began to turn out freely; and, on the twenty-first of December, the troops under Generals Gates and Sullivan arrived. The latter officer had taken the route suggested to Lee by Washington, while Gates's division, led by General Arnold, crossed the Delaware at Easton.

The army under Washington, before the arrival of these troops, did not number five thousand effective men; and this force, within ten days, unless some extraordinary efforts were used, would be reduced to fourteen hundred men, by the expiration of enlistment terms. Nor did the arrival of about three thousand men under Sullivan, twelve hundred under Gates, and eighteen hundred Pennsylvania militia under General John Cadwalader, though timely and important, greatly diminish the difficulties with which the commander-in-chief was surrounded. The term of enlistment of most of them was nearly expired, and it was extremely doubtful whether many, even with the additional inducements before them, would remain. To these considerations was added the defection

of many early friends of the cause in New Jersey and elsewhere, which presented one of the most alarming aspects for the future, and in a measure disturbed the faith of the great leader. "Bad as our prospects are," he wrote to Robert Morris, on Christmas day, "I should not have the least doubt of success in the end, did not the late treachery and defection of those who stood foremost in the opposition, while fortune smiled upon us, make me fearful that many more would follow their example; who, by using their influence with some, and working upon the fears of others, may extend the circle so as to take in whole towns, counties, nay provinces. Of this we have a recent instance in New Jersey; and I wish many parts of Pennsylvania may not be ready to receive the yoke."*

No wonder, then, as his contemporaries affirm, that Washington was never seen to smile at that time. Crushing cares and responsibilities were pressing upon him with fearful weight. "I saw him at that gloomy period," says Wilkinson; "dined with him, and attentively marked his aspect; always grave and thoughtful, he appeared, at that time, pensive and solemn in the extreme."† Yet that pensiveness and solemnity were no indications of a desponding soul. They were the insignia that marked a mighty and hopeful spirit, struggling with great difficulties, and considering great purposes. The chief knew that whatever was to be done to raise the spirits of the troops and revive the hopes of the people, must be done quickly; and, at that time, his plan for attacking the British cantonments on the Delaware was matured and on the eve of execution.

* Among the prominent men who had espoused the republican cause at the commencement, and now abandoned it, was Tucker, president of the late New Jersey convention, which had approved of the Declaration of Independence, and formed the state constitution. He took a British protection when the proclamation of the brothers Howe went forth. For ten days after the issue of that document two or three hundred persons in New Jersey daily sought pardon and protection. Allen and Galloway, of Pennsylvania, who had lately been delegates in the continental Congress, also deserted the cause at this time; and the fear of the influence of the Quakers (who were nearly all tories), in Philadelphia, caused Putnam and Mifflin to so strenuously advise Congress to remove to Baltimore. In Delaware and Maryland the number of the disaffected was very large, for the speedy triumph of the mother-country seemed certain. The timid, especially men of property, took this favorable opportunity to keep themselves from harm

† Memoirs, i., 123.

Even at that hour, when all selfish feelings should have stood abashed before a comprehensive patriotism, another general officer, the friend and confidant of Lee, an adventurer likewise, but possessed of less genius and more discretion than his now captive friend, was seeking to despoil Washington of his official honors, that he might wear them himself. That officer was General Gates, whose arrogant assumption of rank over General Schuyler in the northern department, and whose insolent bearing toward Washington, we have already noticed.

On the arrival of Gates at Washington's camp, the commander-in-chief freely communicated to him his plans for attacking the Hessians on the Delaware, expecting to receive his approval and hearty co-operation; but to his surprise, Gates pleaded sickness, and asked leave to proceed to Philadelphia. The request was granted, but at the same time, Washington urged Gates to stop at Bristol on his way, where Cadwalader, associated with Colonel Reed, was in command of the Pennsylvania recruits, and about five hundred Rhode Island troops which had formed a part of Lee's division. These were charged with the service of keeping a vigilant watch over the movements of Count Donop and his Hessians on the opposite side of the Delaware; and as some questions of etiquette might arise among the continental colonels, concerning the chief command there, Washington desired Gates to adjust them, by having it understod that Cadwalader was acting as brigadier, and was to be obeyed as the chief officer. But Gates, apparently acquiescing for the moment, had other views, and paid no attention to the wishes of the commander-in-chief. He took quarters at Newtown, where he remained until the twenty-fourth, and then started for Philadelphia, accompanied by Major Wilkinson. On the way he criticised the plans of Washington in a spirit akin to that of Lee. Like that officer, he was impatient of subordinate station, and was now actually on his way to Baltimore, to propose measures to Congress for the formation of an army below the Susquehanna, expecting, no doubt, to have an independent command. He partially revealed his schemes to Wilkinson, who,

refusing to accompany him further than Philadelphia, returned to camp, bearing a letter from Gates to the commander-in-chief.

Washington resolved to attack the British posts on the Delaware at the same instant, and Christmas night was chosen as the most favorable time to cross the river and fall upon the Hessians, because the Germans, being habitual revellers on that festival, would be off their guard, and more liable to a surprise. Washington's effective force, at that time, was less than six thousand men. His head-quarters on the twenty-fourth, were at Newtown, a little northeast from Bristol, where lay the main body of his army, with Greene and other general officers in command. Cadwalader, as we have seen, was at Bristol with one division of the Pennsylvania recruits, and General Irvine was stationed with the other division at Trenton falls, a little below (opposite) that village.

The projected attack was as follows: Washington, with a considerable force was to cross the Delaware at M'Conkey's ferry (now Taylorsville) eight or nine miles above Trenton, march down, and before daylight attack Colonel Ralle, who lay there with fifteen hundred Hessians, a troop of light-horse, and some chasseurs. At the same time General Irvine was to cross at the ferry, a mile below Trenton, and secure the bridge over the Assumpink, on the south side of the village, to cut off Ralle's retreat; and General Putnam, with some of his troops in Philadelphia, and General Cadwalader at Bristol, were to cross at the same time, and attack the cantonment of Donop at Bordentown and the posts below Burlington. Despatches were accordingly sent to these several commanders, to cross the Delaware in time, on Christmas night, to be ready for a simultaneous attack on the following morning, at five o'clock. The tories in Philadelphia, elated with the prospect of a speedy entrance of the British troops into their city, showed such evident signs of insurrection, that Putnam could not fully co-operate in the plan, but sent Colonel Griffith, his adjutant-general, into New Jersey, with five or six hundred Pennsylvania militia, to act in concert with Cadwalader.

These preparations were made with great secrecy, and the active

Colonel Reed was Washington's chief instrument in arranging the details of the plan of operations below Trenton. As early as the twenty-second, Reed had written to the commander-in-chief from Bristol, giving him full information of events below, the prospect of an immediate attack upon Griffin, who was at Mount Holly, and suggesting a simultaneous blow upon the Hessians at Trenton. Washington immediately sent for Reed, to whom he communicated the general outlines of his plan. The adjutant-general hastened back to Bristol, to assist in arranging the intended movements below, and to carry out some plan of immediate operations. The next morning he received a hurried letter from his chief, whose contents betrayed the writer's anxiety of mind. "The bearer is sent down," he said, "to know whether your plan was attempted last night, and if not, to inform you that Christmas day, at night, one hour before day, is the time fixed upon for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven's sake, keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us; our numbers, sorry am I to say, being less than I had any conception of; but necessity, dire necessity, will, nay must, justify an attack. Prepare, and in concert with Griffin, attack as many of their posts as you possibly can with a prospect of success; the more we can attack at the same instant, the more confusion we shall spread, and the greater good will result from it." In a postscript, he added: "I have ordered our men to be provided with three days' provisions ready cooked, with which, and their blankets, they are to march; for if we are successful, which Heaven grant, and the circumstances favor, we may push on. I shall direct every ferry and ford to be well guarded, and not a soul suffered to pass without an officer's going down with a permit. Do the same with you."*

A cold storm was gathering in the heavens toward the evening of the twenty-fifth, while Washington's troops, chiefly New England battalions, twenty-four hundred strong, with twenty pieces of artillery, were slowly marching toward M'Conkey's ferry, led by Gen-

* Wilkinson's Memoirs, i., 125. This letter was directed to Colonel Reed, or in his absence, to General Cadwalader "only."

eral St. Clair, and followed by the chief, and Generals Greene, Sullivan, Stirling, Mercer, and Stephen. Toward sunset they paraded near the banks of the Delaware, at the chosen crossing-place, with the expectation of reaching the opposite shore by midnight. But there were serious obstacles in the way. The mild weather that had prevailed for nearly a fortnight, providentially delaying the preparation of the ice-bridge for which the British were waiting, had suddenly terminated, and the severe frosts of twenty-four hours had so filled the stream with floating ice, that at first a passage seemed impossible. But all misgivings were laid aside, and at sunset the embarkation in boats and batteaux commenced, under the direction of Colonel Glover and his fishermen-soldiers of Marblehead—those noble patriots who so efficiently assisted in the retreat of the Americans from Long Island, nearly four months before. The wind was high and the current strong; and as the night closed in, a storm of sleet and snow commenced, and the darkness became intense.

It was at the moment when Washington, whip in hand, was about to mount his horse to superintend the embarkation, that Wilkinson, bearing the letter from Gates, reached the presence of his chief. He had traced the route of the army from Newtown without difficulty, "as there was a little snow upon the ground, which was tinged here and there with blood from the feet of the men who wore broken shoes," and overtook his brigade near M'Conkey's ferry, at dusk. He at once sought the quarters of the commander-in-chief, and presented the letter of Gates. "Before receiving it," says Wilkinson, "he exclaimed with solemnity: 'What a time is this to hand me letters!' I answered that I had been charged with it by General Gates. 'By General Gates! Where is he?'—'I left him this morning in Philadelphia.'—'What was he doing there?'—'I understood him that he was on his way to Congress.' He earnestly repeated—'On his way to Congress!' then broke the seal, and I made my bow and joined General St. Clair on the bank of the river."*

* Wilkinson's Memoirs, i., 127. General St. Clair, no doubt, had some suspicion of the designs

This was one of the incipient steps taken by Gates in that cabal, in which, a few months later, he was a conspicuous actor in efforts to remove his chief from supreme command; yet Washington, with sufficient cause for distrust, seems to have been too generous and confiding to indulge a suspicion of Gates's duplicity and ingratitude.

Nearly all night long did Glover's men battle with the ice, the current, and the tempest, in ferrying over the troops. Washington and his staff crossed before midnight, and on the dreary eastern shore of the Delaware, with a black forest in the background, he stood for a long time watching, with intense anxiety, the perilous movement, especially of the artillery, for on that strong arm of the service he much depended in the enterprise before him. These, under the direction of Colonel Knox (whose powerful voice could be distinctly heard on both shores above the tumult of armed men, the clashing of vessels in the gloom, the grinding of the ice, and the howling of the tempest), were safely landed by three o'clock, and at four the whole army were ready for marching. Trenton, where the enemy lay, was almost nine miles distant. Daylight would come too soon for a surprise, and it would also too soon discover a retreat, that could not be made without the greatest danger. So Washington resolved to push on to the attack, and risk an open battle rather than such a retreat.

Washington separated his troops into two divisions, one to march by the lower or river road, that entered Trenton on the west, and the other by the upper or Pennington road, that entered on the north, the distance by each being about the same. It was designed to have the two divisions fall upon the enemy simultaneously at these points. To insure this result, as far as note of time could do it, Washington gave orders that every officer's watch should be set by his, and the moment of attack was fixed.* Greene led the

of Gates; for when Wilkinson applied to him for leave to accompany that officer to Philadelphia, St. Clair observed that he should have no objection if he did not think it interested his (Wilkinson's) honor, at that time, to remain with the brigade.

* I have before me an interesting letter (MS.), descriptive of events at this time, written by the distinguished General William Hull (then a captain in the Connecticut line) to the Honorable Andrew Adams, of Litchfield, Connecticut, in which this fact is mentioned.

column that took the upper road, and was accompanied by the commander-in-chief, and Generals Stirling, Mercer, and Stephen. Sullivan led the other division along the river road, with Stark's New Hampshire regiment in advance.

Some traitorous republican had revealed Washington's secret to the enemy the day before, and General Grant, at Princeton, gave Colonel Ralle timely warning of the intended attack. The exact time was mentioned, but it was understood that the assault was to be made by a detachment under Lord Stirling. Ralle was, accordingly, on the alert. At dusk, the very time when the Americans were battling with storm and flood, a small company of republicans (an advance party returning from the Jerseys to Pennsylvania, according to Colonel Reed*) emerged from the woods near Trenton, attacked a Hessian picket, and immediately retired. This firing aroused the garrison, and all flew to arms. Ralle visited the outpost that had been attacked and found alarm and confusion prevailing, and six men wounded. With two field-pieces he traversed the woods in the vicinity, and made the rounds of the outposts; but seeing and hearing nothing, and finding all quiet he returned. Believing this to have been the meditated attack, and regarding the whole affair with contempt, Ralle ordered his troops back to their quarters, with assurances of safety, and all slept carelessly without their arms, in fancied security.†

Washington gave orders that the two divisions, on arriving at Trenton, should simultaneously force the outer guards and rush into the town, before the enemy could have time to form. The march was so well conducted that the advance of both divisions encountered the enemy's pickets at the same time. That of Greene was led by Captain William Washington, who afterward greatly distinguished himself as a cavalry officer in the South, seconded by Lieutenant Monroe, who, forty years later, was president of the United States. That of Sullivan was led by Colonel Stark, the gallant hero of Bennington eight months afterward.

* Life and Correspondence of President Reed, i., 277.

† Manuscript Hessian Journals, cited by Irving, in his Life of Washington, iii., 479.

Although it was eight o'clock in the morning, the attack was a complete surprise, for the falling snow had so deadened the noise of tramping feet, and the rumbling of cannon-carriage wheels, that the enemy had no warning of their approach. The storm was so severe that no one was abroad to observe or give intelligence; and the garrison were first certified of their peril by the fugitive pickets, who, closely pursued by the Americans, fled into the town, firing from behind houses, trees, and fences on the way. The Hessian drums beat to arms, and the trumpets of the light-horsemen brayed out the alarm; but before Colonel Ralle, who had been supping, and wine-drinking, and card-playing, at the house of a tory all night, could fly to his quarters, mount his horse, and proceed to form his scattered soldiery in efficient order for battle, the Americans were driving his troops before them, like chaff before the wind.

Part of Greene's division had pushed down King (now Warren) street, and part down Queen (now Greene) street, while Sullivan's came in by Front and Second streets. The enemy were thus hemmed in by the Assumpink and their assailants. At the head of King street, Captain Forest opened a six-gun battery of field-pieces, which commanded that avenue, and Washington advanced with it, on the left, directing its fire. In this position he was very much exposed, but no entreaties could make him fall back. With eager eye and anxious mind he was watching and directing momentous events, and he had no thoughts of personal peril.*

Very soon the enemy were seen preparing a two-gun battery in the same street, when Captain Washington and Lieutenant Monroe dashed forward with a small party, drove the artillerymen from their guns just as they were about to fire, and captured their pieces. Both officers were slightly wounded but not disabled.

While these movements were in progress on the left, Stark was pressing on upon the right. The British light-horse and about five

* It is said, that at that time, when Washington, with his sword raised, was giving his orders, a musket-ball passed between his fingers, slightly grazing them. He only remarked: "*That* has passed by."—Barber's Historical Collection of New Jersey, page 297.

hundred Hessians, quartered in that section of the town, dashed across the Assumpink bridge and fled to the camp of Donop, at Bordentown. General Irvine, who was to have crossed the river below Trenton and secured this avenue of escape, was prevented by ice, or these would, doubtless, have been captured. Meanwhile, Colonel Ralle, at the head of his grenadiers, was bravely endeavoring to resist the storm that was upon him, when a musket-ball wounded him mortally, and he fell from his horse, pale and bleeding. His aids and servant bore him away to his quarters, in the house of a Quaker, and Scheffer, his next in command, took his place at the head of the troops. But all order was at an end. On seeing their commander fall, the Hessians fled in dismay, the main body attempting to escape by the road to Princeton. Perceiving this, Washington sent Colonel Hand and his riflemen to intercept them, while a Virginia corps, under Colonels Scott and Lawson, gained their left.

Ignorant of the smallness of the force that stood in their way, and panic-stricken and bewildered, the fugitive mercenaries threw down their arms and implored mercy. For a moment, Washington, who saw them from a distance, thought they were forming for battle, and ordered a discharge of canister shot upon them; but when he observed their flag trailing, he spurred to the spot, followed by Captain Forest and his whole command. Colonel Ralle was there, in the arms of his attendants, and with feeble hand, delivered his sword to the victor. Wilkinson, who had been despatched to Washington for orders, rode up at that moment, when the commander-in-chief took him by the hand, and with countenance beaming with complacency, said: "Major Wilkinson, this is a glorious day for our country."* Skirmishing had now ceased, the battle was over, and victory was with the Americans.

Although the admirable plans of Washington were not more than half carried out, owing to the state of the weather, and condition of the river, yet the results of the triumph at Trenton were glorious. Cadwalader's attempt to cross the river at Bristol, like

* Wilkinson's Memoirs, i., 131.

that of Irvine at Trenton ferry, was a failure. He got over with a part of his troops, but the ice prevented the embarkation of his artillery, and he returned. Could he and Irvine have crossed in time, Donop's force at Bordentown must have been dispersed or captured, and the victory would have been more brilliant, extensive, and enduring. As it was, the Americans at Trenton were in a critical situation, for Donop was only a few miles distant, with a greatly superior force, and there was a strong body of British infantry at Princeton.

Nothing but the fearful panic which the fugitive light-horsemen and Hessians caused in their flight, by the tale that the assailants were fifteen thousand strong, saved Washington and his army. He clearly perceived his peril, and the impossibility of maintaining his position at Trenton with all his captives; so, without giving his wearied soldiers time for rest, he re-crossed the Delaware that evening, with his whole force, almost a thousand prisoners, and the spoils of victory. During thirty hours that his army had been exposed to a heavy storm, fatiguing march, and a battle, he lost only seven men. Four of these were wounded, two were killed, and one frozen to death. The trophies of victory were four stand of colors, twelve drums, six brass field-pieces, and a thousand stand of arms and accoutrements. Of the enemy, six officers besides Colonel Ralle, and about forty men, were killed.

Just before leaving Trenton, on the evening of the twenty-sixth, Washington, accompanied by Greene, visited the dying Colonel Ralle at his quarters, and with a heart overflowing with generous emotions in that hour of splendid triumph, the American chief offered the brave German those words of consolation which a soldier and a Christian can bestow. This kindness and attention from his conqueror soothed the dying agonies of the expiring hero; and his last words, which expressed thoughtful concern for his grenadiers, were mingled with the whisperings of grateful sentiments. Ralle died the same evening, and was buried in the graveyard of the Presbyterian church.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TROOPS COMPLIMENTED FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR AT TRENTON — DISPOSITION OF THE CAPTIVE HESSIANS — THEIR TREATMENT — CADWALADER AT BRISTOL — HE CROSSES INTO NEW JERSEY — HIS DILEMMA — FLIGHT OF THE ENEMY — HOW THE INHABITANTS WERE TREATED — EFFECT OF THE TRIUMPH AT TRENTON — WASHINGTON'S MODESTY — PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS — WASHINGTON'S RECEPTION OF THE DICTATORSHIP — PREPARATIONS FOR RE-CROSSING THE DELAWARE — ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT — PECUNIARY AID FROM ROBERT MORRIS — ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS — MOVEMENTS OF THE BRITISH — CORNWALLIS AT TRENTON — SKIRMISHES AND THEIR RESULTS — THE NIGHT ENCAMPMENTS — CRITICAL SITUATION OF THE AMERICANS — WASHINGTON'S NIGHT MARCH TO PRINCETON — BATTLE AT PRINCETON AND DEATH OF GENERAL MERCER — ROUTE AND PURSUIT OF THE BRITISH TROOPS — CORNWALLIS AT PRINCETON — WASHINGTON ENCAMPED AT MORRISTOWN — NEW JERSEY WRESTED FROM THE ENEMY.

WASHINGTON returned to his quarters at Newtown, on the night of the twenty-sixth, and on the following morning, in general orders, he highly complimented his soldiers on their good conduct the previous day.* And in his despatch to the Congress announcing the victory, which he sent by Colonel Baylor, his first aid-de-camp, on the same day, accompanied by one of the Hessian standards,† he said: "In justice to officers and men, I must add, that their behavior upon this occasion reflects the highest honor upon them. The difficulty of passing the river in a very severe night, and their march through a violent storm of snow and hail, did not,

* "He with pleasure observed," says Captain Hull (MS. letter to Judge Adams), "that he had been in many actions before, but always perceived some misbehavior in some individuals, but in that action he saw none."—"Pennsylvania itself," adds Hull, "is obliged to acknowledge the bravery of the New England troops."

† Colonel Baylor presented the despatch and the standard to Congress, and after receiving them, they voted that a horse properly caparisoned for the service should be presented to him, and that he should be recommended to General Washington for promotion to the command of a regiment of light-horse, with the same rank as Colonel Sheldon, lately appointed to the same command.—Journal of Congress, January 1, 1777.

in the least, abate their ardor; but, when they came to the charge, each seemed to vie with the other in pressing forward."

On the same morning, the captive Hessians, who had crossed Johnson's ferry, were escorted to Newtown by Colonel Weedon, of Virginia. The officers, twenty-three in number, were quartered in private houses, and the common soldiers in the church and jail. All were treated with great kindness by the commander-in-chief. Lord Stirling was particularly courteous to the officers, for he remembered with gratitude the good treatment he had received from the Hessian general, De Heister, during his recent brief captivity on Long Island. "He treated me like a brother while a prisoner," said Stirling, "and so, gentlemen, will you be treated by me."*

The captive officers signed paroles of honor, and after being sent from place to place, were finally quartered at Winchester, in Virginia. On the way there they were at first treated with the greatest contempt. The multitudes that came out to see them, hooted at and reviled them; the old women of the villages scolding at them most furiously for coming to rob them of liberty. "At length," wrote one of the officers in the journal quoted by Mr. Irving,† "General Washington had written notices put up in town and country, that we were innocent of this war, and had joined in it not of our own free will, but through compulsion. We should, therefore, be treated not as enemies, but friends." After that they experienced much kindness and humanity.

The cannonade at Trenton on the morning of the twenty-sixth, was distinctly heard by Cadwalader at Bristol, and soon afterward vague reports of victory for the republicans reached him, and produced the greatest joy in his army. Every man was eager to participate in equal honors, and again Cadwalader made an attempt to cross the Delaware. It was accomplished at a little past noon the following day, when a despatch from Washington came with full particulars, and information that he was again at Newtown, with prisoners and spoils.

Cadwalader was in a dilemma. It was impossible for him to

* Irving's Life of Washington, iii., 489. † Ibid., iii., 492

join Washington, and he was about to retreat, when Colonel Reed advised him to proceed, for he thought the way was clear to Burlington, their landing in open day having alarmed the enemy. Griffin, as we have seen, had penetrated New Jersey, but on account of illness and scarcity of troops, he did not feel competent to attack Donop or the other cantonments of the enemy. He had, therefore, acted as a decoy to draw Donop farther from Trenton, while Washington should strike his contemplated blow there. In this he was successful, and at the time when Washington and his army were marching for M'Conkey's ferry on Christmas day, Donop, with almost two thousand men, went out to confront Griffin. The latter retired slowly, skirmishing all the while, until he had lured Dunop as far as Mount Holly, when he decamped in haste, leaving the Germans there. Of this fact Cadwalader was informed. Were they there yet? was an important question for Cadwalader, as he stood on the Jersey shore on the afternoon of the twenty-seventh, with but a feeble force.

This question was soon answered by Colonel Reed, who, with two or three officers, pushed forward to Burlington and beyond, to reconnoitre. There were no signs of the enemy, and Reed pressed on to Bordentown. There he learned that Donop had returned from the pursuit of Griffin, just in time to hear of the defeat of his countrymen at Trenton, and that he and his troops then fled in the greatest alarm and confusion to the interior, some of them toward Amboy, but most of them to the British headquarters at Brunswick. Cadwalader immediately advanced to Bordentown, with eighteen hundred men, where he awaited orders from the commander-in-chief.

The victory was now complete. The bold stroke at Trenton, resulting in such brilliant success, was the pivot of destiny upon which the cause of the Americans seemed to turn. The English, who had regarded the patriots with utter contempt, and believed their power to be forever broken, were overwhelmed with astonishment. The tories and pliant whigs, lately so exultant and loyal, were greatly alarmed and silent; and Colonel Reed found the

inhabitants between Burlington and Bordentown pulling down the red rags which they had nailed to their doors to insure British protection, with sincere repentance for their folly, for they had suffered all that could have been inflicted upon open enemies. The friends of liberty, so lately bowed to the earth, rising from the depths of despondency, stood erect in the pride and strength of their principles, and confident of ultimate success. The prestige of the Hessian name was broken, and the terror which they had inspired, as foes invincible and implacable, passed away. The faltering militia flocked with eagerness to the standary of Washington; and many of the soldiers of the campaign, who were about to leave the army with disgust, joyfully re-enlisted. Cornwallis, who, as we have seen, was about to depart for England, believing the rebellion to be at an end, was ordered back to New Jersey. General Grant, who was at Brunswick with the main army, advanced to Princeton, and the other British forces in the Jerseys were as much concentrated in the direction of Trenton as circumstances would allow.

Although Washington fully estimated the value of the victory he had just achieved, and must have been conscious of his claims to merited glory, he evinced no special elation nor pride of bearing. On the contrary, his letters to other officers, and his dispatch to Congress, like that from Boston on a similar occasion, nine months before, were evidences of an humble spirit, and great modesty and calm dignity in the writer. "I have the pleasure of congratulating you upon the success of an enterprise," he said, "which I had formed against a detachment of the enemy lying in Trenton, and which was executed yesterday morning;" and then he gave a dispassionate account of the circumstances, concluding with a recommendation of Colonel Baylor, the bearer of his letter, to the special notice of the Congress. That body, meanwhile, sitting at Baltimore, and undisturbed by any impending danger, were doing all in their power to strengthen his hands. An immediate increase of the army was ordered, and the new levies were directed to march in companies and half companies, as soon as raised, to

Washington's camp; the pay of the militia was made the same as that of other troops; General Knox was appointed brigadier, and placed at the head of the artillery; and Washington was empowered, "by bounties or otherwise," to prevail upon the troops, whose term of enlistment was about to expire, to remain with the army.

And it was on the day after the victory at Trenton, and before they could possibly have heard of that event, that the Congress invested Washington with definite dictatorial powers. The resolutions conferring those powers reached him on the thirty-first, when he was in the midst of preparations for another bold and successful movement against the enemy. This mark of confidence touched his heart, and he instantly wrote, that it claimed his "warmest acknowledgments." He assured them, that all his faculties should be employed to direct properly the powers which they had vested in him, and expressed a hope that if his exertions "should not be attended with the desired effect," they would impute the failure to the peculiarly distressed situation of public affairs. To the congressional committee in Philadelphia, through whom the resolutions were sent, he said, in a letter written on the same day: "Instead of thinking myself freed from all *civil* obligations by this mark of their confidence, I shall constantly bear in mind, that as the sword was the last resort for the preservation of our liberties, so it ought to be the first thing laid aside when those liberties are firmly established."*

Not for a moment after his victorious blow at Trenton had been struck, did Washington cease devising and maturing measures for following it up; and after allowing his troops to rest for two days, he commenced re-crossing the Delaware with his army, for the purpose of occupying the field just won, and marching upon the enemy at Princeton and Brunswick, should circumstances seem to promise success. The spirit infused into the troops and people by his triumph, and the panic that had seized the enemy, together

* Letter to Robert Morris, George Clymer, and George Walton, January 1, 1777.—Sparks, iv., 256. American Archives, Fifth Series, iii., 1510.

with his increasing strength in new recruits, made him confident. He instructed Generals M'Dougall and Maxwell, then at Morristown, to collect as large a body of militia as they could, and harass the enemy on flank and rear; and he also ordered Heath to abandon the Highlands, where the severe weather was a sufficient guard, and advance toward the Delaware with the eastern militia, by way of Hackensack, as rapidly as the season would admit.

Washington's army commenced the passage of the Delaware on the twenty-ninth, and on the following morning he crossed over to Trenton himself. The passage was made slowly, and with great fatigue, for heavy ice filled the stream. It took two days for all the troops and artillery to cross; and then followed hours of extreme anxiety and perplexity for the commander-in-chief. The time of service of many of the most experienced troops was just expiring, and the question, "How many will remain?" was one of serious import at that critical moment. To obtain an immediate and decisive answer, he ordered those regiments to be paraded, and their intentions ascertained. Worn down by the fatigues of a campaign of extraordinary duration and hardships, and yearning for home, they were disposed, at first, to leave the army in a body, but after much persuasion, and the exertions of their officers, one half, or a greater portion, of those of the eastern states, consented to stay six weeks longer, on a bounty of ten dollars, provided it should be paid in hard money, for already distrust of the continental currency was beginning to cause its depreciation.

Washington promised the bounty and the metal. But how was it to be obtained? The military-chest was low, and the credit of the Congress was not sufficient to raise any considerable amount by a pledge of the public faith. Washington had foreseen this difficulty. He knew that if the credit of the Congress was low, there was universal and unbounded faith in Robert Morris, the wealthy merchant and able financier in Philadelphia, who had expressed a strong desire to have the blow struck at Trenton followed up by equally bold and powerful ones.

Washington wrote to Morris, on the thirtieth, for pecuniary aid,

and confidently calculated upon receiving it. Nor was he disappointed. Morris received the application just at evening. He knew not where to apply for the money, and in a desponding spirit unusual for him, he left his counting-room at a late hour, musing upon the subject. He met a wealthy Quaker neighbor, and made known to him his wants. "Robert, what security canst thou give?" asked the Quaker. "My note and my honor," promptly responded Morris. "Thou shalt have it," was the equally quick reply; and a few hours later Morris wrote to Washington: "I was up early this morning to despatch a supply of fifty thousand dollars to your excellency. It gives me great pleasure that you have engaged the troops to continue; and if further occasional supplies of money are necessary, you may depend on my exertions, either in a public or private capacity."

Thus strengthened, Washington turned his face toward the enemy. He had no certain information concerning their number and movements, and on the morning of the thirtieth, he sent out Colonel Reed to reconnoitre their outposts, and procure intelligence. Reed was accompanied by six volunteers, and when within three miles of Princeton, he endeavored to persuade some of the inhabitants to go into the British camp there for information. They were all so terrified by the treatment they had just received, that no offer could tempt them to undertake the service.

But Reed was determined not to return fruitless. Shortly afterward, when within sight of the town, he saw some British troops enter a house. He and his companions rushed forward, surrounded the house, took twelve dragoons and a commissary, prisoners, and returned with them in triumph to Trenton the same evening. From these, correct and important information was obtained. Cornwallis, they said, had just been sent back to New Jersey, by General Howe, and had joined General Grant at Princeton, with a reinforcement of superior troops; and the enemy, between six and seven thousand strong, were pressing wagons to begin their march toward Trenton the next morning.* A British sergeant, who

* Life and Correspondence of President Reed, i., 282.

escaped capture by Reed and his party, declared, on his arrival at Princeton, that he had fought his way through fifty horsemen. His story was believed, and the fear and caution which it inspired, appears to have caused a temporary delay in the march of Cornwallis's troops.

Intelligence also reached Washington, that General Howe, with a thousand light troops, had landed at Amboy, and was on his way to join Cornwallis; and this, with other vague rumors of reinforcements and forward movements, revealed to Washington the web of peril that was weaving for him. His force was too small to meet the enemy with confidence in the open field, and another retreat into Pennsylvania would dispirit all of his troops, and especially the New Jersey militia. An increase of his own force must be at the expense of places exposed to almost equal danger, and also to submit the reinforcements to the immediate peril that threatened his own little army. There was no alternative but risk or ruin; and on the thirty-first, he called to his aid Cadwalader, at Crosswicks, and Mifflin, at Bordentown, whose united forces numbered about thirty-six hundred men. They obeyed with alacrity, and by a night march reached Trenton on the first of January.

On the arrival of these reinforcements, Washington formed his troops in battle order, upon the high southern bank of the Assumpink, near the narrow stone bridge, over which the Hessians and light-horsemen escaped, and planted his artillery in a position to command it. His advance guard were posted in a wood near the Princeton road, about three miles from Trenton, and a strong detachment was sent to defend the Assumpink ford above Trenton bridge. His whole force was not more than five thousand strong, and one half of these were undisciplined militia, while that of the enemy, hourly expected, was equal in numbers, and composed of British regulars thoroughly instructed in all the arts of war known to the best soldiery. In this position Washington calmly awaited the appearance of the enemy, while men of influence were sent by him into different parts of New Jersey, "to spirit up the militia."—"If what they have suffered," he wrote to Congress, "does not

rouse their resentment, they must not possess the common feelings of humanity."

Early on the morning of the second of January, word came to Washington, that Cornwallis was approaching with his whole force. His drums immediately beat to arms, and General Greene was sent out with quite a strong detachment to harass the enemy on their march. At a little past noon, Cornwallis's advance assailed that of Washington. The latter gave way, and were closely pursued by the invaders. There was continual skirmishing all along the line of retreat; and, when the enemy reached high ground near Trenton, at three o'clock, they were confronted by a strong party of riflemen, under Colonel Hand. These held the British in check, and it was four o'clock before the head of Cornwallis's column reached Trenton, while his rearguard, under General Leslie, were yet at Maiden-Head, about six miles distant. The Americans had continued to retreat before him, and it was with much difficulty that they crowded across the narrow bridge over the Assumpink, and joined the main army, before the enemy overtook them.

It was now near sunset. Cornwallis drew up his troops in solid column, and marching down Queen street, attempted to force the bridge, but he was three times signally repulsed by the American artillery and rifles. He also attempted to cross at the ford, where he met with equal resistance, and fell back. For more than an hour these efforts continued, and much of that time Washington, seated upon his white charger at the south end of the bridge, watched the whirlwind with anxiety, and wisely directed the storm. At length the shadows of evening came, the cannonade ceased, camp-fires were lighted by both parties, and with only a small stream between them, the belligerents lay down to rest, with the expectation of a renewal of hostilities in the morning. "Let us seek the victory to-night," said General Sir William Erskine. But Earl Cornwallis, feeling certain that the game was within his power, said: "No, no, general; let our wearied troops repose to-night, for we may easily bag the fox in the morning."

That was an anxious night for Washington and his officers.

They knew that a general engagement must take place the following morning, and, in such a conflict, the result in favor of the enemy could hardly be considered doubtful. A retreat was now out of the question, for the Delaware was absolutely impassable. In that darkest hour the mind of Washington received light, and his heart was strengthened by sure hope. He knew that most of the enemy's force was now drawn from Princeton, while the larger portion of their baggage and stores remained at Brunswick, beyond; and he conceived the bold expedient of withdrawing his army from Trenton at midnight, and by a stealthy night march by a new and yet unfrequented road, gain the rear of the invaders, take possession of Princeton, and if circumstances should favor, attempt the capture of all they had left on the Raritan. He called a council-of-war at General Mercer's quarters to consider this. At first a retreat down the Delaware, and a passage across at Philadelphia were suggested. Then a battle on the spot was proposed. But both were considered too hazardous, and the proposition of the commander-in-chief then presented, was unanimously approved, and measures for its execution were immediately adopted.

Serious difficulties stood in the way. The weather was mild, the ground soft, and it would be almost impossible to drag their forty pieces of cannon over the proposed route. And could the whole republican army withdraw unobserved by the British sentinels, whose hourly cry could be heard from the camp? This was a question of deep moment, and there was no time for long deliberation. It was speedily solved. While these patriots deliberated, a higher will than man's determined the matter. The Protector of the righteous put forth his hand. The wind suddenly changed to the northwest, intense cold came with it, and by midnight the ground was as hard as a city pavement. Instantly, on the perception of this, all was activity in the American camp. While Cornwallis was soundly sleeping—perhaps dreaming of victory in the morning, Washington sent his baggage off silently to Burlington, and to deceive the enemy, men were set to digging trenches, within hearing of the British sentinels; guards patrolled the lines; and

the camp-fires along the Assumpink were kept bright by using the fences in the vicinity.

At one o'clock in the morning, Washington and his army were on their march along the Quaker road, on their way to Princeton, ten miles distant. Leslie's division, on the direct road, was avoided, and Cornwallis had no suspicion of the movement until dawn, when, notwithstanding the patriot camp-fires were still burning, he found not a man, nor hoof, nor tent, nor cannon there. All was silent and dreary on the south side of the Assumpink, and no man of the British army could tell whither the Americans had fled, until the boom of heavy cannon came from the direction of Princeton, on the keen morning air at sunrise. Cornwallis heard it, and though it was mid-winter, he thought it was the rumbling of distant thunder. "Thunder!" exclaimed Erskine, whose quick ear decided otherwise. "To arms! to arms! my lord; Washington has outgeneraled us! let us fly to the rescue of Princeton!"

General Mercer, at the head of the remnant of his flying-camp, led the advance in that wonderful night march. It was a perilous and fatiguing one, for stumps were yet standing in the new road, and many wheels of the cannon and baggage trains were injured. Their progress was much retarded by the roughness of the way, and it was near sunrise when the army reached the bridge over Stony brook, about three miles from Princeton. General Mercer, with about three hundred and fifty men, many of them youths belonging to the first families in Philadelphia, was detached to take possession of the lower bridge at Worth's mill, on the old highway between Princeton and Trenton. In this movement there was a three-fold object in view—the securing of the bridge, the interception of fugitives from Princeton, and the checking of any retrograde movement of the rearguard of Cornwallis's army.

It was a cold and brilliant morning, and some snow lay upon the ground. As the Americans emerged from the wood that had concealed them, near the Quaker meeting-house, their arms glittering in the early sunlight, they were discovered by a British regiment, under Colonel Mawhood, who had just commenced their march to

join Cornwallis at Trenton. Two other regiments and three troops of dragoons had been quartered at Princeton all night, under marching orders to join the earl in the morning, and were then just forming into line.

Mawhood had passed the bridge by which the old Trenton road crossed Stony brook, when he discovered Mercer's troops. At first he supposed them to be a portion of the broken American army, flying before Cornwallis, and he immediately wheeled, with the intention of intercepting them or keeping them in check, and at the same time, he sent messengers to Princeton to hasten forward the other regiments. Mercer perceived his design, and both parties pressed forward toward the bridge, anxious to first obtain possession of the high ground near Princeton. Mawhood had just crossed the bridge, when Mercer came up. The latter soon crossed, and reached the house and orchard of William Clark, a Quaker, a little eastward of the present turnpike, and immediately formed his riflemen behind a hedge to receive the enemy, who were rapidly advancing. As Mawhood approached, the riflemen poured a destructive volley upon his corps. This was returned with spirit. Mercer's horse was disabled by a musket-ball, and the general was compelled to dismount. One of his colonels was mortally wounded and carried to the rear, and Captain Neal, who commanded a company of artillery, was killed.

The British, now very near, made a furious charge. Mercer's riflemen, destitute of, and unused to the bayonet, broke and fled in great disorder, after the third fire. Mercer, on foot, tried to rally them; and while with voice and gesture he was pleading for them to be firm, he was prostrated by a blow from a clubbed musket, dealt by a British soldier. His rank was at once discovered, and the enemy, believing him to be Washington, raised an exultant shout, crying: "The rebel general is taken!" Several rushed to the spot, exclaiming: "Call for quarters, you damned rebel!"—"I am no rebel," said Mercer, indignantly, as he attempted to rise to defend himself with his sword, and while half a dozen bayonets were at his breast. With these his assailants cruelly thrust him, and leav-

ing him for dead, joined their companions in a close pursuit of the Americans.

Washington, at this time, was pushing on toward Princeton with the main army, undiscovered by the enemy. When he heard the firing on the left, he detached a corps of Pennsylvania militia, with some artillery under Captain Moulder, and with these he hastened to the assistance of Mercer. They had just reached the brow of a hill, when the fugitives and pursuers came in view. Mawhood now, for the first time, became aware that he had attacked only a detachment of the American army. He instantly halted, drew up his artillery, and by a heavy cannonade brought the advancing militia to a stand. At this moment Washington arrived, and at a glance saw the peril of his army. Fearing the panic that gave fleetness to the feet of Mercer's flying troops, would be communicated to his own, he put spurs to his horse, dashed past the trembling militia, toward the enemy, waving his hat and calling loudly upon them to maintain their ground.

The presence and bearing of Washington were the inspiration of courage for the troops. The flight of Mercer's broken corps was checked, and in a few moments order was brought out of confusion. The Pennsylvanians, inspirited by his voice and example, stood firm. A Virginia regiment came from the woods and formed on their right, and all pushed forward with loud huzzas, while Captain Moulder opened a severe fire of grape-shot from his artillery, on a ridge partly upon the British flank.

For fifteen minutes the battle was hot, and Washington was in the thickest of the fight, cheering on his men. At one time he was between the two fires, and his escape from death seemed impossible.* Colonel Fitzgerald, a warm-hearted young Irishman, who was the chief's principal aid on that occasion, seeing the terrible danger that threatened his beloved leader, dropped the reins

* An officer who was with Washington at Trenton and Princeton, writing from Morristown on the seventh of January, said: "Our army love their general very much, but they have one thing against him; which is the little care he takes of himself in any action. His personal bravery, and the desire he has of animating his troops by example, make him fearless of danger. This occasions us much uneasiness. But Heaven, which has hitherto been his shield, I hope will still continue to guard so valuable a life."—Sparks's Life and Writings of Washington, iv. 272.

of his bridle upon his horse's neck, and drew his hat over his eyes, unwilling to see him fall. A roar of musketry and a loud shout succeeded, almost as quick as thought. It was a shout of victory. The aid-de-camp raised his hat, and beheld dimly the noble form of Washington in the midst of the dust and smoke, and the enemy's battalions broken and flying. Dashing his spurs into the sides of his horse, and heedless of the dead and dying in his way, Fitzgerald flew to the side of the chief, exclaiming: "Thank God! your excellency is safe!" and then wept like a child for joy. Washington, ever calm amid scenes of the greatest excitement, grasped the gallant aid's hand affectionately for a moment, and then said: "Away, my dear colonel, and bring up the troops; the day is our own."*

Mawhood, by force of bayonet, soon pushed his way through the victorious republicans, who were gathering thick around him, gained the main road with his broken regiment, and fled toward Trenton, to join Cornwallis. Meanwhile, one of the other regiments at Princeton had been attacked in a ravine near the town, by the American advance-guard, under Colonel St. Clair. A sharp skirmish ensued, but the British soon gave way, and retreated hastily in the direction of Brunswick. A part of the other regiment, which had not come up in time to engage in the battle, joined them in their flight, and the remainder took refuge in Nassau hall, of Princeton college, which, with the presbyterian church, the British had converted into barracks. Washington brought his artillery to bear upon the hall, and after a few discharges, those within surrendered.†

While these operations were in progress near the town, a detachment, under Major Kelly, sent by Washington to destroy the bridge

* Custis's "Recollections of Washington and his Companions-in-arms."

† The first cannon-ball that entered Nassau hall passed through the portrait of George the Third, which hung upon the wall in an elegant gilt frame. The latter was uninjured. The American commander, in order to make good the loss which the college had sustained by his cannon, made the trustees a present from his private purse, of two hundred and fifty dollars, which sum they spent in procuring a full-length portrait of the great leader. It was painted by Charles Wilson Peale, and was placed in the frame from which the mutilated picture of the king was taken. That frame and picture are yet in Nassau hall, at Princeton. For particulars concerning it, see Lossing's "Field-Book of the Revolution," ii., 37, second edition.

over Stony brook at Worth's mill, had commenced the work of demolition. But they had scarcely begun, when the van of the British, advancing from Trenton upon Princeton, appeared upon the hill near by. When Cornwallis heard the thunder of Washington's cannon, at sunrise, he at once comprehended the peril to which his stores at Brunswick were exposed, and he immediately commenced a forced march in that direction. As his advance-guard approached the bridge, they hurled heavy round-shot upon Major Kelly and his party, and drove them away; not, however, until the loose planks were thrown into the stream, and the bridge was rendered almost impassable. Delay was dangerous—perhaps it might be fatal; so Cornwallis ordered his troops to dash into and ford the swollen creek. It was breast deep and almost filled with ice; yet his soldiers obeyed, and in their mail of frozen clothing, hastened on toward Princeton, leaving their artillery behind. When near the town they were checked by the discharge of an iron thirty-two-pounder, which the enemy had left on a temporary breastwork, at the west end of the village. It was fired by some laggard of the rearguard of the republicans. Believing Washington designed to make a stand at Princeton, Cornwallis halted his column, and sent out some light-horsemen to reconnoitre, and at the same time, a large detachment of his troops approached the battery cautiously, intending to take it by storm. By these movements they were delayed an hour, and when they reached the breastworks and village, they found both deserted, and not a "rebel" in sight! Washington and his little army, with prisoners and spoils, were far on their way toward the Millstone river, in hot pursuit of the two fugitive British regiments. Cornwallis astonished and mortified by this second escape of his enemy, was in doubt for a while, whether to halt or pursue. The danger of losing his stores at Brunswick caused him to go on.

The battle at Princeton and its results, following closely upon the brilliant affair at Trenton, a few days before, produced a strong impression upon the public mind in favor of the commander-in-chief, and of the cause, and strengthened the republicans amazingly. Considering the numbers engaged, it was one of the severest con-

flicts of the war, and both parties displayed the most gallant courage. Never was a commanding general more exposed to death, than was Washington when rallying and leading the troops in the battle, yet he escaped unhurt. The enemy lost about one hundred killed, and three hundred in wounded and prisoners. Captain Leslie, a son of the earl of Devon, who was much beloved by his companions-in-arms, was among the slain. The entire loss of the Americans was about thirty, including several valuable officers. Among them, besides General Mercer, were Colonels Haslet and Potter, Major Morris, and Captains Shippen, Fleming, and Neal. The loss of General Mercer was a severe blow to the commander-in-chief and the army. He had been Washington's companion-in-arms in his campaign against the French and Indians, in 1755; and his kindness of heart, his bravery, and true patriotism, made him beloved by all. He lingered in great pain, at the house of Mr. Clark, on the battle-field, until the twelfth, when he expired in the arms of his aid-de-camp, Major George Lewis, a nephew of the commander-in-chief.*

Washington pursued the enemy to Kingston, beyond the Millstone river, three miles northeastward from Princeton, and then held a council-of-war on horseback. The enemy's stores at Brunswick were very tempting, and a wish was earnestly expressed by his officers, to continue the route to that place. "Oh, that we had five hundred fresh men," they said, "that we might beat up their quarters there." But the prudent and humane chief decided otherwise and well he did, for that step would have been a fatal one. His troops had not slept for thirty-six hours; and during all that time they were exposed to intense fatigue and the excitements of battle, while more than half of them, not able to procure breakfast

* On the fourteenth of January, the body of General Mercer was conveyed to Philadelphia, and buried in Christ churchyard. Over it was placed a plain marble slab, with the simple inscription—"In memory of General Hugh Mercer, who fell at Princeton, January 3d, 1777." In 1840, two societies of Scotchmen (St. Andrews and the Thistle) removed his remains to Laurel Hill cemetery, and placed a beautiful monument over them. General Mercer was a native of Scotland, and was an assistant-surgeon in the battle of Culloden. He settled in Fredericksburgh, in Virginia, as physician and apothecary. He was engaged in the French and Indian war, and was among the first in espousing the republican cause when the Revolution was kindling. General Mercer was about fifty-six years of age at the time of his death.

or dinner, were almost famished. Many of them were thinly clad, without blankets, and destitute of shoes or stockings; and all were now, in every way, unfit to contend even with an inferior force. Cornwallis, with fresh troops and superior in numbers, was in close pursuit, and a battle with him would be unavoidable if they continued to march toward Brunswick; so Washington, to save his army destroyed the bridge at Kingston, and hastened on toward Pluckemin, where he arrived the same evening. Overcome with fatigue, many of his troops had lain down and slept upon the frozen ground by the way.

Washington's destination was the hill-country at Morristown, where he intended to place his army in winter quarters, if no situation more favorable could be found. After allowing his soldiers time for brief rest and refreshments at Pluckemin, he advanced. He arrived at Morristown on the sixth, and cantoned his troops in the vicinity. Cornwallis, in the meantime, after repairing the bridge at Kingston, pushed eagerly forward toward Brunswick—so eagerly over the rough and hard-frozen roads, that several of his baggage wagons were disabled, and some of them, containing woolen clothing, were captured by a party of Americans that night. The earl reached Brunswick at sunset, and was again disappointed, in finding that Washington had eluded his pursuit; but he consoled himself with the reflection that his stores were safe.

Washington did not sit down quietly at Morristown. The events of the preceding three months had aroused all of the stronger feelings of his nature, and the suggestions of a wise caution were, for the time, less potent than usual. After the achievements just accomplished, he could not rest until New Jersey, over whose territory he had so recently made a humiliating flight, was rescued from the heel of British power. He perceived the effects of his recent triumphs, upon the enemy, and knew that a favorable moment to strike other blows had arrived. "They appear to be panic struck," he wrote to General Putnam from Pluckemin on the fifth. "and I am in some hopes of driving them out of the Jerseys." He then directed him to march his troops to Crosswicks, and "keep a

strict watch upon the enemy in that quarter." He warned him of the alertness of an enemy after having been twice attacked by surprise, and said: "you will give out your strength to be twice as great as it is." He also directed him to have a number of horsemen, "in the dress of the country," kept constantly on patrol, to watch the enemy and give information.

To General Heath he wrote on the same day: "The enemy are in great consternation, and as the panic affords us a favorable opportunity to drive them out of the Jerseys, it has been determined in council, that you should move down toward New York, with a considerable force, as if you had a design upon the city. That being an object of great importance, the enemy will be reduced to the necessity of withdrawing a considerable part of their power from the Jerseys, if not the whole, to secure the city." He then gave other explicit directions concerning the movements of troops under Heath's command. To General Lincoln, who was also at Peekskill, he wrote two days afterward, and said: "I beg of you, be as expeditious as possible in moving forward, for the sooner a panic-struck enemy is followed the better. If we can oblige them to evacuate the Jerseys we must drive them to the utmost distress; for they have depended upon the supplies from that state for their winter's support."

In pursuance of his plans, Washington established cantonments at various points from Princeton to Morristown, and as soon as he arrived at the latter place, he commenced offensive operations. Colonel Reed was ordered to send out rangers and detachments of militia to patrol the country, waylay foraging parties, cut off supplies, and attack and harass the enemy in every possible way. "I would not suffer a man to stir beyond their lines," said Washington; "nor suffer them to have the least communication with the country." These expeditions were generally successful, and the people, incensed at the bad faith of the English, and the depredations of the Hessians, joined the Americans on all occasions. The British quarters soon became straitened, their resources were all curtailed or entirely cut off, and by the first of March, not a British or Hes-

sian soldier remained in New Jersey, except at Brunswick and Amboy.

Alluding to these results, the eloquent Charles Botta observes: "Achievements so stirring gained for the American commander a very great reputation, and were regarded with wonder by all nations, as well as by the Americans. The prudence, constancy, and noble intrepidity of Washington was admired and applauded by all. By unanimous consent he was declared to be the savior of his country; all proclaimed him equal to the most renowned commanders of antiquity, and especially distinguished him by the name of the AMERICAN FABIUS. His name was in the mouths of all; he was celebrated by the pens of the most distingushed writers. The most illustrious personages of Europe lavished upon him their praises and their congratulations.* The American general, therefore, wanted neither a cause full of grandeur to defend, nor occasion for the acquisition of glory, nor genius to avail himself of it, nor the renown due to his triumphs, nor an entire generation of men perfectly well disposed to render him homage."

* It is said that Frederick the Great, of Prussia, declared that the achievements of Washington and his little band of compatriots, between the twenty-fifth of December and the fourth of January, were the most brilliant of any recorded in the annals of military achievements.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CONTRAST — APATHY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT — FOOLISH PRIDE — BURKE'S VIEWS — GREAT CHANGE IN THE RELATIVE POSITION OF THE ARMIES — CORNWALLIS HUMILIATED — EXASPERATION OF THE NEW JERSEY PEOPLE — THE ARMY AT MORRISTOWN — FITNESS OF THAT POSITION — WASHINGTON'S MILITARY FAMILY — GENERAL PUTNAM'S MOVEMENTS — HEATH'S EXPEDITION TOWARD NEW YORK — WASHINGTON'S OPINION OF THE RESULT — HIS EXERCISE OF DICTATORIAL POWERS — HIS PROCLAMATION AGAINST TORYISM — JEALOUSY OF STATE RIGHTS AND MILITARY POWER AROUSED — WASHINGTON'S FIRMNESS — INOCULATION OF THE ARMY — WASHINGTON'S SYMPATHIES EXERCISED — ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW ARMY — APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL OFFICERS — THE DEPARTMENTS RE-ORGANIZED — PROCEEDINGS IN RELATION TO PRISONERS.

THE third year of the war for independence had now opened, and the contending parties, in the council and in the field, presented strong contrasts. The Americans were vigilant and active, while the British were strongly apathetic. With haughty pride, born of ignorance concerning the true character and temper of the Americans, the British ministry and Parliament, during the momentous year just closed, affected to regard the rebellion, so called, in America, as only a temporary outbreak, that would soon subside; and king, lords, and commons took their ease, confident that the brothers Howe would either cajole or chastise the rebels into submission.

Notwithstanding a British army had been driven from one city, and a British fleet from another; notwithstanding thirteen of their best colonies had declared themselves independent, and were confederated for the support of that independence; and almost thirty thousand of the choicest British troops and fierce German hirelings had been defied and combated, the Parliament did not assemble until the last day of October, to deliberate on these important matters. Then the king in his speech, congratulated them upon

the success of the royal troops in America, and assured them (but without the shadow of a good reason for the belief, as we have already observed) that most of the continental powers entertained friendly feelings toward Great Britain.

During a dull session of six weeks, new supplies of men and means for the American service were voted, while every conciliatory proposition was rejected with disdain; and when the Parliament adjourned, on the thirteenth of December, to keep the Christmas holydays—at the very time when Washington was planning his brilliant achievements on the banks of the Delaware—the majority appeared to feel that their *votes* had crushed the rebellion, and that on their re-assembling, on the twenty-first of January, they would be invited by the king and his ministers to join in a *Te Deum* at St. Paul's, because of submission and peace in the revolted colonies. Even the hopeful and penetrating mind of Edmund Burke, the defender of America and the rights of man, partook of the doubts which troubled all the friends of the republican cause at that time, and he speculated upon the submission to tyranny to which the colonies must be speedily subjected. "The affairs of America seem to be drawing to a crisis," he wrote on the ninth of January. "The Howes are, at this time, in possession of, or able to awe, the whole middle coast of America, from Delaware to the western boundary of Massachusetts Bay; the naval barrier on the side of Canada is broken. A great tract is open for the supply of the troops; the river Hudson opens the way into the heart of the provinces, and nothing can, in all probability, prevent and early and offensive campaign. What the Americans have done is, in their circumstances, truly astonishing; it is, indeed, infinitely more than I expected from them. But, having done so much for some short time, I began to entertain an opinion that they might do more. It is now, however, evident that they can not look standing armies in the face. They are inferior in everything—even in numbers. There seems, by the best accounts, not to be above ten or twelve thousand men, at most, in their grand army. The rest are militia, and not wonderfully well composed or disci-

plined. They decline a general engagement; prudently enough, if their object had been to make the war attend upon a treaty of good terms of subjection; but when they look further, this will not do. An army that is obliged, at all times, and in all situations, to decline an engagement, may delay their ruin, but can never defend their country."

Before this was written, the whole aspect of affairs in America had changed. The power of the Howes along that "middle coast," except at two or three points, had been scattered to the wintry winds. Soon after the Parliament re-assembled, the English people and their representatives were filled with the greatest anxiety; for intelligence came, that the territory which their army had so lately won, was not only wrested from their temporary possession, but that their generals were compelled to sue humbly at the feet of Washington, for the privilege of sending a convoy of money and stores across that domain, to some of their German hirelings in captivity. Cornwallis must have been deeply mortified when he was compelled to inquire of Washington, whether such convoy might safely pass through New Jersey to the Hessian prisoners in Pennsylvania, and a surgeon with medicines to the wounded at Princeton; and keenly must he have felt the sting of Washington's reply, when, after assuring him that no molestation would be offered to either party by the regular army under his command, he said: "But I can not answer for the militia, who are resorting to arms in most parts of this state, and who are exceedingly exasperated at the treatment they have met with, from both Hessians and British troops."

And well might Washington doubt the safety of any British or Hessian soldier who should be exposed to the fiery indignation of the New Jersey people. During the few preceding weeks, they had suffered terribly from their invaders. Lulled into fancied security by the proclamation and promises of the British commanders, the inhabitants of New Jersey had remained at home, and not a hundred of them had openly joined the standard of Washington during his retreat for twenty days through that prov-

ince. Bitterly did they now repent of their faith in those promises. The Hessian soldiers, in particular, plundered friend and foe alike, unable or unwilling to distinguish the difference. Nor was plunder their only offence. They committed outrages upon the weaker sex which aroused the most terrible longings for revenge; and when the yeomanry of the state felt the heel of their presence lifted from their necks, they flew to arms as one man, to avenge public and private injuries.

Washington's first care on reaching Morristown, was to place his army in as comfortable quarters as circumstances would allow. He had chosen that position only as a temporary halting-place for repose, but he soon perceived that it was a most secure and eligible point for a winter encampment. A chain of hills extending from Pluckemin, near the north branch of the Raritan, by way of Chatham and Springfield, to the great falls of the Passaic, at Paterson, made the approach to him from the seaboard very difficult for a hostile army; while on his rear was a populous and fertile country, full of provisions and forage. It was also a commanding point from which to watch the movements of the enemy, or to harass his outposts; and the communication between the army and the Congress could not be interrupted.

With all possible despatch, Washington hutted his soldiers in log cabins. The main army were thus encamped in the sheltered vale of Lowantica, where woods and springs abounded; and small cantonments, as outposts, were established at eligible points all the way to the Hudson Highlands. The commander-in-chief made his headquarters at the Free-Mason's tavern, in Morristown, and near him were his three most valued generals, Greene, Sullivan, and Knox. His military family was composed of the accomplished Colonels Meade and Tilghman, of Philadelphia, who were his aids-de-camp, and his secretary, Colonel Robert H. Harrison, of Maryland, whom the chief loved and honored for his truthfulness, simplicity of character, and unbending integrity. Colonel Reed, his adjutant-general, now retired from the army for awhile. General Putnam, who had been left at Crosswicks, in the rear of the enemy

with a small number of men, was ordered to move forward to Princeton, and be constantly prepared to retreat toward the mountains, to join the main army at Morristown, if circumstances should compel him to cross the Raritan.*

Heath, meanwhile, had moved toward New York, as directed. His troops were all militia. They were led in three divisions. One commanded by General Lincoln, of Massachusetts, marched down the road nearest the Hudson; General Scott, of Virginia, led the centre, by way of White Plains; and the left marched from New Rochelle and East Chester, commanded by Generals Wooster and Parsons, of Connecticut. These divisions reached the enemy's outposts, near Kingsbridge, at the same time (just before sunrise on the eighteenth of January), when some skirmishing took place, and some prisoners were taken from the enemy at Valentine's hill, in the rear.

On an eminence in Westchester overlooking Spyt den Duyvel creek, near Kingsbridge, was a small work called Fort Independence, occupied by the British. Before this Heath drew up his army, and in a rather pompous manner, demanded a surrender. "Twenty minutes only," he said, "can be allowed for the garrison to give their answer; and should it be in the negative, they must abide the consequences." The garrison gave no answer at all; and General Heath, after remaining ten days in the vicinity, retreated with his troops toward the Highlands. The expedition was an utter failure, and Heath's summons excited a good deal of ridicule in both armies. "Your summons," said Washington, in a private letter to him, written on the third of February, "as you did not attempt to fulfill your threats, was not only idle but farcical; and will not fail of turning the laugh exceedingly upon us. These things I mention to you as a friend, for you will perceive they

* At Princeton, General Putnam had occasion to obey the injunction of Washington, to magnify the number of his troops, while exercising his kindness of heart. There he found Captain M'Pherson, a British officer, terribly wounded, and at his request, Putnam sent a flag to the British camp at Brunswick, in quest of a comrade of the dying soldier. The visiter was brought after dark, when all the rooms of the college, and other buildings in Princeton, were lighted, and the few American troops fit for duty were marched and countermarched in such a way, that the officer, on his return to the British camp, reported Putnam's force to be at least five thousand strong.

have composed no part of my public letter." In reply to this letter, Heath made a reasonable defence of his conduct, attributing his failure to the fact that his force was wholly militia, that it was necessarily much scattered, and that a heavy storm had spoiled a great deal of ammunition, and rendered a general co-operation of his whole army out of the question.*

Washington exercised the dictatorial powers conferred upon him by the Congress, with energy and great circumspection, and with an eye single to the good of his country. His first care, after his troops were comfortably quartered, was the construction of an efficient army for the next campaign, and to quiet the apprehensions of the people. Notwithstanding there was a violent reaction in New Jersey, there were many substantial, peace-loving men in that state, who had given in their oaths of allegiance to the British commissioners, who now professed to have scruples in regard to that oath, considering it as binding them to a passive neutrality. These were summarily dealt with by the commander-in-chief, who saw the importance of marking boldly the line of distinction between friends and foes, and wiping out every pretension of middlemen. Accordingly, on the twenty-fifth of January, he issued a proclamation, commanding all persons who had received protections from the British commissioners, to repair to headquarters, or to the nearest quarters of any general officer of the continental army, within thirty days, and there take an oath of allegiance to the United States, and give up any certificate, protection, or passport he might have received from the enemy. At the same time, full liberty was given to all such, as "preferred the interests and protection of Great Britain, to the freedom and happiness of their own country, forthwith to withdraw themselves and their families

* "This expedition," says Sparks (Washington's Writings, iv., 308, note), "was originally a project of the convention of New York, and, by the consent and order of General Washington, who also had a larger object in view, it was put under the direction of General Heath, as the continental commander in that district. General John Morin Scott headed a body of the New York co-operating militia. This gentleman, and Mr. William Duer, both members of the convention, were, with two or three others, appointed a committee to manage the affair in behalf of that assembly." General Heath, in his reply to Washington, on the sixth of February, says that he summoned the garrison of Fort Independence to surrender, "in particular at the motion of a gentleman," before he left Peekskill.—See Heath's Memoirs, pages 107 to 113, inclusive.

within the enemy's lines." It was further decreed, that all who should refuse or neglect to comply with this order, should be considered adherents of the king, and treated as enemies to the United States.

Jealousy of state sovereignty, and a lingering fear of military power among the timid and extremely cautious, raised the question whether Washington had not transcended the powers given him, and exercised a degree of despotism in this measure. Even the legislature of New Jersey, that state recently so cold to his entreaties for aid, and now so much indebted to him for deliverance, hinted that it was an encroachment upon their prerogatives; and in the continental Congress, some members censured the course of the commander-in-chief. But these signs of opposition did not move Washington. He was fully convinced of the necessity, reasonableness, and justice of the measure, and, unmindful of his personal popularity, he adhered to it, and commanded his officers to enforce the letter and spirit of his proclamation. His wisdom was soon vindicated by subsequent events.

Before taking active measures for establishing a permanent army, Washington provided against another enemy, more formidable than the British or Hessian soldier. That foe was the small-pox. It had made dreadful ravages in the northern army the previous year, decimating, as we have seen, whole regiments. It had also impaired the strength of the middle department, and its approach was dreaded with terror. Early in January it had appeared here and there in the camp, at Morristown, and Washington determined to inoculate all the soldiers in the continental service. With the greatest secrecy preparations were made to give the infection in camp; and the hospital physicians, in Philadelphia, were ordered to carry all the southern troops, as they should arrive, through the disease. Similar orders were also given to the physicians at other places; and thus an army, exempted from the fear of a calamity, which had, at all times, endangered the most important operations, was prepared for the ensuing campaign. This example was followed throughout the country; and that alarming disease became

no longer the terror of America.* While the disease was in progress it produced much suffering, especially among those who took the malady in the natural way. From the camp it extended to the neighboring villages, and scarcely a family was exempted from its visits. Other diseases attended it; and in one parish alone there were two hundred and five deaths during that year. Washington's sympathies were keenly alive to the distress around him, and "he might be seen," it is said, "in Hanover and in Lowantica valley, cheering the faith and inspiring the courage of his suffering men." The gayeties common to a winter encampment of the army were nearly all suspended, for "death rioted on every hand, and dancing and death make not pleasant partners."†

On the twenty-fourth of January, Washington issued a circular letter to all the New England governors, entreating them to use great and immediate exertions in levying and equipping the number of battalions allotted to their respective states. The sixteen new battalions authorized by Congress, on the twenty-seventh of December, to be immediately raised, were to be established on a different footing from the eighty-eight battalions authorized to be raised, by the same body, a few months before. The appointment of the officers of the latter were to be referred to the several states respectively, according to their quota of each, whereas the appointment of those of the sixteen new battalions or regiments, was left to the commander-in-chief. He was also, as we have seen, authorized to raised men in any or all of the United States. In the judicious exercise of this power, he directed Colonel Gist, of Maryland, to raise four companies of rangers, and proceed to the Cherokee, or any other nation of Indians, and endeavor to procure not exceeding five hundred warriors to enter the continental service. He was instructed to offer them the same pay as the white soldiers received, and also arms, blankets, and other necessaries. "I am not aware," says Sparks, "that any Indians were obtained."‡

* Marshall's "Life of Washington," i., 137.

† "Washington at Morristown," by Rev. George F. Tuttle: Harper's Magazine, February, 1859

‡ "Washington's Writings," iv., 271, note.

For several months Washington had urged upon the Congress the necessity of a larger number of general officers in the army. He had always exercised the greatest delicacy and caution on this subject, seldom expressing an opinion concerning the qualifications of individuals, and avoiding the appearance of partiality, or a wish to interfere, in the smallest degree, with the appointing power. This subject had engaged much of the attention of the Congress. They had often discussed the points that disagreements among the delegates frequently raised, and these produced delays, and sometimes sharp contentions. Now the subject assumed an importance that demanded instant decision, and on the nineteenth of February, Lord Stirling, Thomas Mifflin, Arthur St. Clair, Adam Stephen, and Benjamin Lincoln, were commissioned major-generals. The latter had displayed so much zeal and merit, as commander of the Massachusetts militia, that he was promoted over the heads of all the brigadiers; while Arnold, whose alleged misconduct while in command at Montreal, and whose unsettled accounts were themes for animadversion and suspicion, was entirely overlooked. He complained loudly of this slight, and, doubtless, with some justice; and who shall say that the noxious seeds of that discontent which finally budded and blossomed into the baleful flower of treason, were not planted at that time?

Washington had already appointed the colonels of ten of the new regiments;* and soon after the appointment of the five new major-generals, eighteen new brigadiers were commissioned.† These appointments well supplied the army with general officers, in point of numbers; but state claims, political influence, and personal favoritism, elevated some into these responsible stations, whose merits did not entitle them to the honor.

* These were Nathaniel Gist, John Patton, William Grayson, Thomas Hartley, Samuel B. Webb, David Henley, Ezekiel Cornell, Henry Sherburne, Alexander Scammell, and Henry Jackson. The appointments to the other six regiments were made at different times subsequently.

† These were Poor, of New Hampshire; Glover, Patterson, and Learned, of Massachusetts; Varnum, of Rhode Island; Huntington, of Connecticut; George Clinton, of New York; Wayne, De Haas, Cadwalader, Hand, and Reed, of Pennsylvania; Weedon, Muhlenburg, Woodford, and Scott, of Virginia; Nash, of North Carolina; and Conway, an Irishman, who had been an officer in the French army for thirty years.

Four regiments of horse were also enlisted, and placed under the respective commands of Colonels Baylor, Bland, Sheldon, and Moylan. The command of horse was offered to both Reed and Cadwalader, who declined their appointments. The former, who had made himself very obnoxious to the eastern troops, had resigned, as we have seen, the office of adjutant-general. General Gates was solicited to re-assume the duties of that office,* but he refused, and the commission was given to Timothy Pickering, a colonel of the Massachusetts line. General Mifflin, who had been at the head of the quartermaster's department, remained, and affairs under him were conducted in a more efficient manner by the appointment of assistant-quartermasters, wagon-masters, and commissioners of forage, who were required to report to him monthly. Congress attempted to thoroughly re-organize the commissary department, and claimed the right to make subordinate appointments in it. So much did this new order of things interfere with the commissary-general (Joseph Trumbull, Jr.), and impair the efficiency of the department, that he resigned in disgust. Such intermeddling of the Congress with the minor appointments of the army produced mischievous effects, for the personal friends of members of that body, though often incompetent, were appointed to places which called for peculiar talent, energy, and honesty. On the whole, however, the continental army was upon a much better footing in the spring of 1777, than it had ever been.

From the commencement of the war, the subject of prisoners, their treatment and exchange, had been topics for occasional and sometimes spicy correspondence between the commanding generals. The number of Americans taken by the British down to the close of 1776, was four thousand eight hundred and fifty-four; the number of British taken by the Americans, was two thousand eight hundred and sixty.† The latter number was increased by the

* Journal of Congress, February 20, 1777.

† In addition to men, the Americans had lost twelve brass cannon and mortars, and two hundred and thirty-five made of iron; twenty-three thousand nine hundred and seventy-nine empty shells, and seventeen thousand one hundred and twenty-two filled; two thousand six hundred and eighty-four double-headed shot; a large quantity of grape-shot; two thousand eight hundred muskets; four

affair at Princeton; and ten days after that event, Washington wrote to Howe on the subject of an exchange of prisoners. In the previous July, it had been mutually agreed that officers should be given for officers, of equal rank, soldiers for soldiers, and citizens for citizens; and upon this basis exchanges had been made until the capture of General Lee. The British commander chose to consider him a deserter from the British army, treated him as such, and returned letters unopened, which the captive wrote to him, directed to "Lieutenant-Colonel Lee," that being the rank he held in the British army when he resigned his commission, in June, 1775. He was accordingly kept in more rigorous confinement than prisoners-of-war.

Intelligence of this fact reached Washington at the time when he was urging an exchange of Colonel Ethan Allen, captured at Montreal more than a year before, and who had experienced very harsh treatment. It also came with accounts of the cruel treatment endured by American prisoners at New York and elsewhere, who were confined in loathsome jails and prison-ships, subjected to every indignity, exposed to sickness and death, and denied many of the common courtesies of humanity. The *Jersey* hulk, in the waters of the East river near Brooklyn, and the Liberty street *Sugar House*, in New York, were the most conspicuous of these prisons; and their names have a significance in the American mind synonymous with all that is barbarous, cruel, and inhuman.

Allegations concerning the harsh treatment of American prisoners, well substantiated by sufferers and eye-witnesses, aroused the ire of the Congress, and they soon resolved to adopt retaliatory measures. This was thought necessary, not only for the support of the dignity of the supreme legislature, but as a protection to officers who might fall into British hands. Lee, meanwhile, professed to be under great apprehensions for his personal safety, and complained of his close confinement. On the tenth of February, he addressed a letter to the Congress, requesting them to send two

hundred thousand cartridges; sixteen barrels of powder; five hundred intrenching tools; two hundred barrows and other instruments, and large quantities of provisions and stores.

or three gentlemen to New York, to receive from him a communication of that which, he said, deeply interested himself and the whole community. He believed, he said, that the most salutary effects might flow from such conference; and he assured them that the British commanders would give safe conduct to such embassy. Lee enclosed this appeal in a letter to Washington, in which he remarked: "As the contents of my communication are of the last importance to me, I most earnestly entreat, my dear general, that you will despatch it immediately, and order the Congress to be as expeditious as possible."

Washington complied with Lee's request, and after the captive's letter was read, the Congress resolved, that the commander-in-chief should inform Lee, that they were doing all in their power to "provide for his personal safety, and to obtain his liberty," but that they judged it "altogether improper to send any of their body to communicate with him;" and that they were unable to see "how a compliance with his request would tend to his advantage or the interest of the public."*

This refusal wounded Lee deeply. His pride, his ambition, his reckless spirit, were all subdued, and in a tone of sadness, unmixed with any of his usual satire and self confidence, he wrote to Washington on the subject, saying: "It is a most unfortunate circumstance for myself, and I think not less so for the public, that Congress have not thought proper to comply with my request. It could not possibly have been attended with any ill consequences, and might with good ones. At least it was an indulgence which I thought my situation entitled me to. But I am unfortunate in everything, and this stroke is the severest I have yet experienced. God send you a different fate. Adieu, my dear general."

Lee's captivity was not so hard to be borne as was represented. He was kept in close confinement, it is true, but, by direction of General Howe, three rooms were fitted up for him in the New York City Hall, where he spent much of his time in writing, and in the society of the British officers. He confessed that he had English

* Journal of Congress, February 21, 1776.

prejudices; and, as we shall observe hereafter, his friendly intercourse with the British leaders at that time, had a deeper significance than mere courtesy or kindly feeling. With them he was secretly plotting the ruin of the American cause, while the Congress, commiserating his hard fate, and indignant because of his alleged rigorous treatment, were adopting retaliatory measures. On the twentieth of February they resolved, "That the board of war be directed immediately to order the five Hessian officers, and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell into safe and close custody; it being the unalterable resolution of Congress to retaliate on them the same punishment as may be inflicted on the person of General Lee." This resolution was immediately enforced. Colonel Campbell was placed in the common jail at Concord, in Massachusetts, and the Hessian officers, then in Virginia, were also closely confined, and deprived of the privileges usually granted to prisoners-of-war.

Colonel Campbell, supposing Washington to have power to regulate his treatment, wrote to him, giving in his letter a picture of the wretched place in which he was confined, and appealing for relief. Washington's heart was touched, and he at once wrote to Colonel Campbell, assuring him that his harsh treatment was not called for by the resolution of Congress, but was the result of misconception, and that proper steps would be taken to remove all cause for complaint. To the Massachusetts council he also wrote, calling their attention to the fact, that the resolution of Congress required only that exactly the same treatment was to be shown to Colonel Campbell and the Hessian officers, that General Howe showed to General Lee; "and, as he is only confined to a commodious house, with genteel accommodations," he said, "we have no right or reason to be more severe upon Colonel Campbell, who, I wish, should immediately, upon the receipt of this, be removed from his present situation, and put into a house where he may live comfortably."*

* Lieutenant-Colonel Archibald Campbell was a gentleman of fortune and culture, and at that time a representative in Parliament for Dunfermline, in Scotland. He had commanded one of General Frazer's battalions of Highlanders (the 71st), and had been captured in June, the previous year, on board of a British transport in Nantasket roads, near Boston.

To the president of Congress he also wrote, on the first of March, deprecating the resolve to retaliate. He clearly perceived the injurious tendency of the measure, and presented a forcible, argumentative remonstrance against it. "In point of policy," he said, "under the present situation of our affairs, this doctrine can not be supported. The balance of prisoners is greatly against us; and a general regard to the happiness of the whole should mark our conduct. Can we imagine that our enemies will not mete the same punishments, the same indignities, the same cruelties, to those belonging to us, in their possession, that we impose on theirs in our power? Why should we suppose them to possess more humanity than we have ourselves? Or why should an ineffectual attempt to relieve the distresses of one brave, unfortunate man involve many more in the same calamities? However disagreeable the fact may be, the enemy at this time have in their power, and subject to their call, near three hundred officers belonging to the army of the United States. In this number there are some of high rank; and most of them are men of bravery and of merit. The quota of theirs in our hands bears no proportion, being not more than fifty at most. Under these circumstances, we should certainly do no act to draw upon the gentlemen belonging to us, and who have already suffered a long captivity, greater punishments than they have experienced, and now experience. If we should, what will their feelings be, and those of their numerous and extensive connections? Suppose the treatment prescribed for the Hessians should be pursued, will it not establish what the enemy have been aiming to effect by every artifice, and the grossest misrepresentations, I mean an opinion of our enmity toward them, and of the cruel conduct they experience when they fall into our hands, prejudice which we, on our part, have heretofore thought it politic to suppress, and to root out by every act of lenity and of kindness? It certainly will. The Hessians would hear of the punishment with all the circumstances of heightened exaggeration, and would feel the injury, without investigating the cause, or reasoning upon the justice or necessity of it. The mischiefs which may and must

inevitably flow from the execution of the resolves, appear to be endless and innumerable."..... "Many more objections might be subjoined, were they material. I shall only observe, that the present state of our army, if it deserves that name, will not authorize the language of retaliation, or the style of menace. This will be conceded by all who know that the whole of our force is weak and trifling, and composed of militia (very few regular troops excepted), whose service is on the eve of expiring."

Thus it will be perceived, that Washington was compelled to grapple with every species of difficulty. A weak and broken army was his chief support in the field; a meddling Congress already disturbed by factions, interfered with nearly all his movements; and jealous local legislatures, assuming power and functions that properly belonged only to the supreme council of the states, were continually perplexing him by their exercise of these, in a way that was frequently very detrimental to the republican cause. The weight of all the chief affairs of the revolted nation, civil and military, were in a great degree laid upon his shoulders. He bore it with wisdom, calmness, and fortitude; and hope and cheerfulness often beamed clearly from his eye in the public presence, because expediency demanded the exhibition of this encouraging lustre, while sadness sometimes brooded in his heart. Yet his faith never yielded.

Washington had already written to Lord and General Howe in reference to the alleged cruelties of those in charge of the American prisoners. "I am sorry," he wrote to the former, on the thirteenth of January, "that I am under the disagreeable necessity of troubling your lordship with a letter, almost wholly on the subject of the cruel treatment which our officers and men, in the naval department, who are unhappy enough to fall into your hands, receive on board the prison-ships in the harbor of New York." After making specific complaints, and asserting that kindness to British prisoners had been the uniform practice of the Americans, he said: "From the opinion I have ever been taught to entertain of your lordship's humanity, I will not suppose that you are privy

to proceedings of so cruel and unjustifiable a nature; and I hope that, upon making the proper inquiry, you will have the matter so regulated, that the unhappy persons, whose lot is captivity, may not, in future, have the miseries of cold, disease, and famine added to their other misfortunes. You may call us rebels, and say that we deserve no better treatment; but remember, my lord, that, supposing us rebels, we still have feelings equally as keen and sensible as loyalists, and will, if forced to it, most assuredly retaliate upon those, upon whom we look as the unjust invaders of our rights, liberties, and properties. I should not have said thus much, but my injured countrymen have long called upon me to endeavor to obtain a redress of their grievances; and I should think myself as culpable as those who inflict such severities upon them, were I to continue silent."

To this Lord Howe replied on the seventeenth, expressing himself surprised at the matter and language of Washington's letter, "so different from the liberal vein of sentiment he had been habituated to expect on every occasion of personal intercouse or correspondence with him." He strenuously denied that naval prisoners were ill treated; asserted that they had been allowed the free range of the prison-ships until some had escaped, and rendered a more rigorous confinement necessary; and declared that they were allowed the same provisions as his own seamen. Justice to both Lord and Sir William Howe requires the expression of an opinion, that they were ignorant of the true state of the case, for they were both honorable and humane men.

In a letter to General Howe, written, also, on the thirteenth of January, Washington said: "I am directed by Congress to propose an exchange of five of the Hessian field-officers, taken at Trenton, for Major-General Lee; or, if this proposal should not be accepted, to demand his liberty upon parole, within certain bounds, as has ever been granted to your officers in our custody. I am informed, from good authority, that your reason for keeping him hitherto in stricter confinement than usual is, that you do not look upon him in the light of a common prisoner-of-war, but as a deserter from

the British services, as his resignation was never accepted, and that you intend to try him as such by a court-martial. I will not undertake to determine how far this doctrine may be justifiable among yourselves, but I must give you warning, that Major-General Lee is looked upon as an officer belonging to, and under the protection of, the United Independent States of America, and that any violence you may commit upon his life or liberty, will be severely retaliated upon the lives or liberties of the British officers, or those of their foreign allies at present in our hands."

Referring to Washington's threat at retaliation, Lord Howe said: "the innocent at my disposal will not have any severities to apprehend from me on that account." And Sir William, also, said, in reference to it: "Your threats of retaliating upon the innocent such punishment as may be decreed in the circumstances of Mr. Lee, by the laws of his country, will not divert me from my duty in any respect; at the same time you may rest satisfied, that the proceedings against him will not be precipitated.* He then proposed a joint commission to settle all disputes concerning prisoners, observing: "This expedient appearing to me effectual for settling all differences, will, I hope, be the means of preventing a repetition of the improper terms in which your letter is expressed, and founded on the grossest misrepresentations." Washington acquiesced in the proposition. Colonel Harrison, the commander-in-chief's "old secretary," as he was called, was appointed on the part of the Americans, and Colonel Walcott on behalf of the British.

* What shall be done with General Lee? had been a question that greatly perplexed General Howe. A week after Lee became his prisoner, Howe wrote to the ministry, informing them of the fact, and asking advice in the matter, especially about bringing him to trial, as he considered Lee a deserter, amenable to the military law of the realm, and excluded from his agreement for an exchange of prisoners. "As you have difficulties about bringing General Lee to trial in America," replied Lord George Germain, "it is his majesty's pleasure that you send him to Great Britain by the first ship-of-war." This, however, was not done, for Washington demanded that General Lee should be considered a prisoner-of-war, and having notable British and Hessian captives in his hands, he possessed the power of enforcing this demand. While the British refused to consider Lee as a prisoner-of-war, Washington declined to exchange the Hessian field-officers taken at Trenton, or Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, and Howe detained Lee for further instructions. This measure of caution, on the part of Howe, was approved, and the minister replied: "His majesty consents that Lee (having been struck off the half-pay list) shall, though deserving the most exemplary punishment, be deemed as a prisoner-of-war, and may be exchanged as such, when you may think proper." See Sparks's Writings of Washington, iv., 276, 277. Lee was exchanged for General Prescott early in 1778, and joined Washington at Valley Forge.

Rules for the exchange of prisoners were made by the commissioners, but when the captive Americans, who had survived the hardships of the prisons and prison-ships of New York were sent out for the purpose, in the spring, Washington refused to return for them an equal number of healthy British and Hessian prisoners, because they were such mere wrecks of men. Sir William Howe complained of this refusal as a violation of the adopted rules for exchange; but Washington defended its justice and fairness with the plea, that the engagement, though in the letter, expressed only an equality of rank and number, yet it necessarily implied a regard to the general principles of mutual compensation and advantage. "This," he said, "is inherent in its nature—is the voice of reason; and no stipulation, as to the condition in which prisoners should be returned, is requisite.... Nor can it be expected that those unfitted for future service by acts of severity, in direct violation of a compact, are proper subjects for an exchange. In such case, to return others not in the same predicament, would be to give without receiving an equivalent; and would afford the greatest encouragement to cruelties and inhumanities."—"Painful as it is," he said in conclusion, "I am compelled to consider it as a fact not to be questioned, that the usage of our prisoners, whilst in your possession, of the privates at least, was such as could not be justified. This was proclaimed by the concurrent testimony of all who came out; their appearance sanctioned the assertion; and melancholy experience, in the speedy death of a large part of them, stamped it with infallible certainty."*

These difficulties and disputes interrupted, for several months, the exchange of prisoners. Early in the summer Elias Boudinot, of New Jersey, was commissioned commissary-general of prisoners, with the rank and pay of colonel, and empowered to appoint two deputies, with the rank and pay of major.† After that the exchange of prisoners went on as regularly and fairly as circumstances would allow.

* Letter to General Howe, April 9, 1777 † Journals of Congress, June 6, 1777